2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

*Mode of Indian Burial*

him constructed of poles. Into this enclosure is placed his 764
personal effects—his saddle and bridle, his tomahawk, scalping knife, bow and arrows and lance, all the inanimate property he possesses. The enclosure is then roofed with bark and covered with earth. This part of the burial ceremony concluded, all his horses and mules, even if he was the owner of a hundred, are brought to the grave and killed. When a squaw dies, her property, also—her calico gown, cooking kettle, tools for dressing skins—are buried with her, and the horse upon which she was accustomed to ride slain in the same manner.

They are buried with their heads to the west, because 764
they believe at the resurrection, of which they have vague 775
and indefinite notions, they will arise and march eastward, again to take possession of all the country from which the accursed white man has driven them and their fathers. They bury their property with them and kill their horses because they suppose their souls will have need of them in the other world.

Among them are prophets, corresponding with our di- 743
vines, who maintain with exceeding strictness their sacer- 731
dotal dignity. The prophet addresses them on various occasions, such as the green corn dance, and the festival of the roasted dog, but especially in the time of the new moon. At all times they listen to him with the most profound reverence, their heads hanging down, and not a murmur of sound among them from the commencement of his exhortation to its close; but in the season of the new moon, they fall on their faces to the earth before him, and there remain still and motionless until the sound of his voice has ceased.

They believe in God, a great spirit, who created and gov- 775
erns the earth, sun, moon, and stars. They have an unwaver-

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858)-1957
NO6 Comanche NO6



•175 ing and undoubting faith in a future state of existence, and in future rewards and punishments. They hold that the soul of the wicked coward or thief, after death, will be driven before the frown of the Great Spirit, afar off into a region barren and cold and desolate, there to wander forever through thorns and among rocks, thirsty, hungry, and in pain; but the good Indian, who has been brave in battle and walked uprightly among his tribe, will be translated to a valley ten thousand times ten thousand fold longer and wider than their own valley of Mannasaw, where the climate is always mild as it is in the moon of plants; where there is cool water, and pounded corn and mustang meat forever at his hand, and where buffalo and deer abound, and the horses are fleeter than the wind.

[173] They have many traditions but no records; nevertheless, 212 they have certain hieroglyphics by which they contrive to communicate intelligence with as much accuracy as if they understood the epistolary art. For instance, if one party goes out before another has returned, and wishes to convey information of the course they have taken and the business they are upon, they will seek some point where it is probable their trail will be discovered. Here, providing themselves with a thin piece of birch bark, which can be folded in the form of a letter without breaking, they will make such figures and emblems upon it as represent the idea they wish to convey. If they are on the war path, the character will be a tomahawk and a scalp; if on a visit to a friendly tribe, it will be a pipe; if on a buffalo or deer hunt, there will be no characters, but the folded bark will simply enclose some of the hair of the animal of which they are 212 in pursuit. If they intend to be absent a month, the emblem 201 will be the full moon; if two weeks, a half-moon, if only a few days, the new moon. Then they strike a hatchet deep

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

*Battle with the Apaches*

As soon as they had left the ground, the Apaches again 727
appeared upon the height, and bore away their dead also. It was a drawn battle.

This encounter was unexpected on both sides. The Apaches, as I learned, were gathered around a spring, cooking their meat, little expecting the approach of an enemy, when the van of our party came upon them. At that time a deadly strife existed between the tribes, and it would have been a scandalous violation of an Indian's idea of manhood to have separated, under such circumstances, without a bloody tilt at arms.

The Comanches lost in this battle seventeen warriors; the Apaches, probably as many more. Had the combatants belonged to a civilized people who keep a record of their wars, it would have furnished a thrilling page of history; but thousands of such sanguinary struggles take place on the lonely prairies of which the world knows not. That same season, however, they buried the tomahawk and danced the pipe dance, and henceforward were at peace.

The close of this eventful day was occupied in burying 727
the slain, which ceremony was performed in their custom- 764
ary manner, except they seemed to chant the death song 775
with more energy and feeling than on ordinary occasions. With them, death, at any time, even the nearest and dearest of their kindred, is not regarded as an event to be deplored, but on the contrary, to be welcomed with rejoicing; but when a warrior dies on the field of battle, their joy and exultation knows no bounds, for their crude theology assures them his departed spirit is, at once, caught up by the Great Spirit, and borne to the region of everlasting and supreme felicity.

We saw no more of the Apaches, and the following day 224
turned our course up the prairie—crossed the mountains

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6



want to know is what has become of these people on the war party. 787
You are wonderful. You know everything.

The answer came in a clear voice—

"They are all killed."

A sickly man with them asked if he would get well.

"You will die in the fall," came the answer.

Then they asked the bird who he was. It was the spirit of an evil medicine man who had died of tuberculosis.

After a while one of them went out to open the flaps of the tipi.

He came back in to light the fire.

They could hear the ghost calling as he went. That was all. » » »

This is the Algonquian spirit séance without the shaking of the tent at the visitation of the spirit. Inasmuch as the northern Shoshoni did not have this rite, it is probable that it was borrowed from the neighboring Cheyennes.[17]

Ghosts did not generally bother the Comanches, but the Co- 775
manches definitely were uneasy about them. The tabu on the use of the names of dead people has already been mentioned several times. Hunters, raiders, and campers often saw and heard groups of people who were there one moment and gone the next. They were ghosts who haunted battlefields or scenes of annihilation.

Ghosts gave great power to the men who could stand up to them. Such ghosts appeared either as bare-bone skeletons or as bloody, scalped spectres waving long knives. Several stories are told of men who were chased all the way home from their vision vigils right into their own tipis by terrifying ghosts, who came with the rising moon.

Not all ran away, however. Slope knew one who got ghost power.

« « « A bunch of Comanches camped near a haunted spot. They asked a young man to go down to the spring for water. He just stalled around.

"Are you afraid?" They asked him.

He said he wasn't, so he took up a cow paunch and started for the water, thinking about ghosts. He heard something behind him; then he felt arms about his neck; he could see only bones—no flesh on

[17] Cf. K. N. Llewellyn and E. A. Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in Primitive Jurisprudence*, 91.

## The Comanches

775 them. He dropped the paunch and seized the arms fast, so he could carry the ghost on his back.

The people heard him coming. They heard the squeaking of the bones.

"Coward, what are you doing out there?" they called. "Bring us that water."

He just threw the skeleton in at them. They all fled and fell in a heap. The ghost disappeared.

That night it came back to the young man. It gave him medicine.

"You will be hard to hit," it told him. "Bullets will never kill you. Keep a ball of white clay with you. When there is going to be a fight, paint yourself white all over."

"Never go into the battle first. Wait until your friends retreat. Then go right in."

The next day the party went on. They made a good raid on a herd of Mexican horses, but the Mexican pursuit caught up with them. The battle started. He went off to one side to prepare himself. Another young man came up to ask for the protection of his medicine. He gave him some and told him how to wait.

At the right time, they charged, and they turned the tide by killing several Mexicans. After that he became a famous warrior. » » »

754 775 Sorcery with ghost medicine is supposed to cause paralysis. In a case of epilepsy, recounted by Breaks Something, a medicine man with power over ghosts was called in. He looked at the patient and said. "This disease has nothing to do with ghosts; it is not in my line; must be something else." He could not help this sickness; it seemed to be something inside of the sick man.

776 Another source of great power for the Comanches, and Shoshones, too, lay in the "little men"—the *nɜnəpi*. They were believed to be no more than a foot high. They were armed with little shields, bows, and arrows, which killed every time they shot. They also threw little spears with points made of alligator spines. The Comanches say that the *nɜnəpi* made all the little stone arrowheads that they found all around. A few daring medicine men sought power from the little men, but most people did not want to possess it, for it was too dangerous: a man might kill someone when he did not want to kill.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6



and scanty information that is available will reveal divergent and conflicting opinions concerning the supernatural.

Comanche religion was exceedingly simple, highly vital, and based on no more than casual attempts to explain satisfactorily the mysterious operations of nature by which he was confronted every day.

After burial, according to the somewhat fanciful account of an adopted Comanche, the spirit of the departed warrior mounted the spirit of his slain pony, his ghostly quiver of bow and arrows at his back, the spectre of his lance in his hand, the shadow of his shield on his arm—to gallop skyward, followed by his phantom herd loaded with ghostly possessions heaped by his relatives and friends in and about his grave. Straight into the sun and the pastures of the Happy Hunting Ground he sped, there to remain an extended time. But eventually, after an excursion in celestial pastures, the spirit of the departed must be reborn of the Earth Mother and return to keep up the population and power off the tribe.[1]

There is no doubt that the Comanches had an unwavering faith in a future existence. As to the nature of their after world, their accounts are fairly uniform. Their after world was generally conceded to be beyond the sun where it sets in the west. It was modeled after the imperfect reality of their everyday existence with all the disagreeable features absent, for all things there were perfect. It was a "valley ten thousand fold longer and wider" than their own valley (this specific reference was probably to the Arkansas), covered with groves, streams, and meadows. There was no rain or wind; the climate was always mild and the water cool. There the great chiefs of all the Comanches held their assemblies, and they and all the warriors were young. They followed the chase, but the war whoop never penetrated those sacred realms. There was no darkness there, for the Great Spirit was everywhere. In this heavenly valley there would always be plenty without the necessity of expending much energy or effort to obtain it. The "shade" of the Comanche could there experience to the fullest measure all the pleasures the material body had experienced or hoped for while on earth. There were buffalo, deer, elk, and antelope in abundance; pounded corn was forever at hand; and horses were fleeter than the wind. Beautiful birds warbled

[1] Hobbs, *op. cit.*, 33–34.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6



from the treetops for his entertainment. And to add further to a condition conducive to a supremely happy after life, there was no suffering or sorrow there. 775

The Comanches knew that all this was so from what they thought was genuine observation. Death and resurrection were not uncommon. The mothers of Post Oak Jim and Slope both died, visited the land of the dead, and returned to life, because it was not yet their time to depart.

« « « My mother died from a fever. An iron grey horse was waiting for her. She got on and rode away.

After awhile, she came upon a travois trail. Many Indians had passed that way. The horse noticed something by the smell and trotted off down the trail neighing.

She came to the top of a high hill. There she looked to the west; the sun was low. Below her she saw a big camp in a grove of tall cottonwoods by a clear creek. The land looked so beautiful. Lots of Indians rode around on horseback. There were women playing old-time games [shinny].

Two men on horseback left the group and began to race toward her. As they approached, she heard them whooping and guns shooting. As they came, she was thirsty and got down to drink from a near-by spring. Scooping up the water, she splashed some on her face. It felt cool.

Then she came to. Her husband was blowing on her face, making a medicine. They gave her water and food; she felt better, got well, and lived a long time. » » »

That was Post Oak Jim's story. Slope's story, told quite independently, reveals the same simple belief. This was the experience of his grandmother, *Ya:ai*, who finally died in 1890, after a long life.

« « « When my grandmother was young, she got very sick. A medicine man worked on her, but he could accomplish nothing. Her time had come. So she died. People began mourning. They buried her possessions.

She started walking toward the other world. At last she came towards a creek bordered with tall cottonwood trees in which was

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6



•775 a big camp. Just before she got to the camp, she looked ahead and saw a large herd of horses. As she came closer to the horses, she saw a man approaching her on horseback. As he came nearer, she saw he was a relative long since dead.

Then she noticed a certain grey horse which had died and which had belonged to her family. The relative roped it for her and told her to mount and hurry to get on, as they had to get along.

She tried to mount the horse, but it balked. The man kept urging her to hurry, but the horse kept balking and balking. She couldn't get there.

Finally, she came to while still trying to get on the horse.

She opened her eyes. She saw people weeping for her. She told them she had come back. She was alive again. She lived a long life after that. » » »

Although Comanche ideas were fairly harmonious concerning the nature of the after world, there was some uncertainty about who might be eligible to enjoy its pleasures. Some early observers thought the Comanches had no idea of accountability; that they believed they would all go to Heaven (except in special cases, as when one happened to be so unfortunate as to lose his scalp after death). Such was the concept generally held by their neighbors on the plains. Among the Cheyennes the "Brave and cowardly, good and bad alike go there. All who have died are equal. After death there is neither reward for virtue nor punishment for sin."[2] On the other hand, nineteenth-century observers flatly reported that the Comanches did believe in future rewards and punishments.[3]

The Comanche's religion taught him that it was his duty to be courageous, to be brave in battle and faithful to his comrades in arms, to be generous to his friends, and to walk upright among his tribesmen. For that he would reap the reward of existence after death. The warrior who died in the fray and the woman who died in childbirth

[2] Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, II, 91.

[3] Interesting comments on Comanche religion are found in these volumes: Marcy, *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border*, 57; Carter, *On the Border with MacKenzie*, 258, 260; Battey, *op. cit.*, 331; Lee, *op. cit.*, 153; Bollaert, "Observations on the Indian Tribes in Texas," *loc. cit.*, 267; Rister, *Border Captives*, 26; Glisan, *op. cit.*, 74; Burnet, "American Aborigines, Indians of Texas," *loc. cit.*, Vol. I (May 15, 1824), 154; R. I. Dodge, *Our Wild Indians*, 102–103, 178, 180–81.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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were expected to receive special consideration on arriving in the eternal home beyond the sun. Mortal wounds or mortal illness vanished at death, leaving the victim free of their effects in the after world. But the spirit of the bad, the lazy, the coward, or the thief would be driven before the Great Spirit into a region that was barren, cold, and desolate, with rugged and sterile mountains infested with noxious animals and insects. There game was scarce, meager, and unsavory, and the soul had to wander through thorns and among rocks, thirsty, hungry, and in pain.

Our own Comanche informants revealed no such notions at all. Nor do the Shoshones have any such conception of post-mortem immanent justice. We suspect these assertions should be taken with a grain of salt, if not rejected.

Believed limitations of immortality included loss of scalp, strangulation, death in the dark, and mutilation. If the scalp were taken after death, the Comanches looked on life as annihilated. A scalp removed before death, whether by accident or design, affected immortality not in the least. To preserve the scalp on the head of a dead comrade was of more consequence than the preservation of one's own life; while by the same token, scalping a foe was of much greater merit than simply sending his spirit out of this world into the next, whence it would eventually return to plague the Comanches anew. "Dot" Babb says the Comanches did not scalp a Negro since they believed he had no soul, but they might kill him to prevent his killing Comanches. But the dance leader's scepter, given to Ralph Linton in 1933, had several scalp symbols on it—tokens of scalps taken by its original owner—and a couple of them (colored differently) were pointed out to represent Negro scalps.

Fear of strangulation arose from the belief that life (spirit or "soul thing") issued from the mouth at the moment of death. Thus if death occurred through choking, the passageway was closed and the spirit, unable to free itself, remained in the mortal body and was forever imprisoned in the ground at burial. Next to fear of strangulation came the fear of death in the dark, for the spirit that left the body in the dark might be unable to find its way to the after world and thus wander forever in darkness. Although the majority believed that mortal wounds or mortal illness vanished at death, there were some who

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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775 believed that such indignities as the body suffered after death, other than the removal of the scalp, permanently affected the spirit or shade. Thus, if the feet were cut from the body after death, the unhappy spirit was forced to dispense with them henceforth.

The Comanche who failed to approach the camp of the after world well mounted might also be refused admission into those celestial pastures. A current legendary story taught the importance of providing the deceased with a good mount. Once an old Comanche died who had no relatives or worldly goods. The villagers, concluding that almost any old nag would serve to transport him to the next world, killed at his grave an old, ill-conditioned, lop-eared horse. A few weeks after the burial of this friendless one, he returned, weary and hungry, riding the same old worn-out horse. He first appeared at a neighboring camp of Wichitas, where he was well known, and asked for something to eat; but his sunken eyes and his strange appearance frightened all who saw him, and they fled from his presence. Finally, one bolder than the rest placed a piece of meat at the end of a lodge pole and extended it to him. Shortly afterwards, he appeared at his own camp, creating even more dismay than in the Wichita village, so that the entire camp moved to Rush Creek, not far distant from the present site of Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Some of the Comanches, however, were bold enough to question the unwelcome, ghostly visitor about his reappearance among the inhabitants of the earth. When he had come to the "gates of paradise," he told them, the people would on no account permit him to enter upon such an ill-conditioned beast as he rode, and thus in sadness he had returned to haunt the homes of the greedy, stingy people who had not properly provided for him. Since then, no Comanche has been allowed to set out for the after world without a steed which would do honor to the rider and his friends.[4]

821 The nature of the cosmos was only vaguely conceived, and contemporary Comanches have no notions what the people thought about it in the old days, if they had any thoughts at all. The Comanches, so far as we can tell, had no star lore, and only the sun, moon, and earth were looked upon as semi-deities.

[4] Yarrow, "A Further Contribution to the Study of Mortuary Customs of the North American Indians," *loc. cit.*, 100.

conciliate the favor of, the Author of the war of elements, I could not determine. Another circumstance induced me to think they might have some notions of a future state. There was a young woman among them, who certainly possessed some traits of character more amiable by far than the most of her race with whom I was acquainted; she sickened and died, when their grief, as usual, was unbounded. I observed to one of the females, that I hoped she was better off than when here; – she smiled, and pointed upwards. The strength of their attachment to each other, and the demonstration they give of the same, even to the dividing of the last morsel with each other upon the point of starvation, might put many professed christians to the blush! But they are just the reverse of all this to all the world beside. They think themselves the cleverest race of men on earth, and treat all others as infinitely inferior to themselves. They have no formal marriages among them. They generally take wives at an early age. Each man is allowed to take five women; but, in making his selection, the ties of consanguinity oppose no barrier; hence they are truly a consanguineous race of so motley a mixture, that it would be impossible to identify the connexions. The distinction, however, [56] might be less obscure, but for the fact, that with them matrimonial alliances oppose no restraint to promiscuous intercourse. The relation of the women to the men differs little from a state of the

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 N06 Comanche N06
Texas



[ca. 1818]

auxiliary to an otherwise impotent authority. The pains and penalties of their criminal laws, are confined almost exclusively to the weaker sex. The incontinence of a wife, is punished by cutting off her nose. This odious abscission is made from the junction of the cartilage and bond, obliquely down to the lip. Several instances of this shocking penal infliction are now extant. But the sentence of mutilation is sometimes remitted in consequence of the interposition of male connections. The decisions of the law always yield to a determined resistance.

If one man wantonly kills another, the nearest friend of the deceased, is permitted, and indeed it devolves upon him as a duty, to revenge his death, by taking the life of the murderer. But the price of blood, may be commuted for articles of more value and convenience than blood, and murder may be atoned for, and the spirit of revenge appeased by liberal donations to the living relatives of the deceased. Such atrocities however, seldom occur. Notwithstanding the extreme laxity of their whole economy of government, and their entire exemption from legal restraint, they live together with a degree of harmony that would do credit to the most refined and best organized societies. The little bickerings and jealousies and inordinate strivings for thrift and distinction, that disquiet and mar the social circles of refinement, are unknown to the rude and simple children of nature.

The Comanchee system of religion is about as perfect and luminous as that of their jurisprudence. They believe in a Supreme Being, and in a future state of existence, but have adopted no mode or manner of worship. Indeed they consider the Supreme Being, to be so far removed from them as not to wish to interfere directly, in their temporal concerns, and as equally unwilling to be interfered with. They therefore leave him to enjoy his repose without molestation, and expect the same indulgence for themselves. They have no idea of a special superintending Providence, or that the Great Spirit takes any particular cognizance of the actions of men. And they consequently defer all their devotional concerns, if indeed they entertain any, to a dark futurity,

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas



[ca. 1818]

175 which has never been shadowed to their minds, except by
771 the faint and flickering light of nature. The beams of divine revelation have never penetrated the dismal mists that constitute their moral atmosphere. They nevertheless be-
175 lieve in a final accountability, in which they plainly, but
771 perhaps unconsciously, indicate a sentiment of the omnis-
775 cience and ubiquity of the Great Judge of Heaven and Earth. By an obvious and natural impulse of unenlightened reason, which is most apt to prefigure the joys and sorrows of a future state, by the experience of the past and present, they suppose that when a good man dies, he goes to a fertile and salubrious country where the Buffaloes, which furnish their principal and favorite aliment, and every desirable species of game are abundant, and where they will enjoy the charms of the chase, with a more exquisite zest, without interruption and without satiety. The reverse of this destiny is assigned to the wicked, who they imagine will be driven away, to linger out a miserable existence, among rugged and sterile hills that are infested with all manner of noxious animals, and where the Buffaloes, Deer and Bears are scarce, and
175 meagre and unsavory to the palate. Goodness, however, in
577 their system of ethics, is a qualified term that has reference to acts of public benefit and renown, such as taking of scalps, expert and successful hunting, and dexterity in stealing from their enemies, rather than to the gentler virtues, that adorn and humanize and purify the heart.

175 They believe in polytheism and in both good and evil
771 spirits of either sex, but claim supremacy to the one Great
776 Being, whom they represent as a Big Man, that can never die, and who is the peculiar original parent of the Co-
[186] manchee race. The origin of other nations they assign to other subordinate Deities, and as their father is the Greatest God in Heaven, so they think themselves the greatest nation
175 on earth. They attribute an inferior modicum of divinity
771 to the sun, and suppose all febrile diseases to emanate from
[821] the displeasure of that magnificent candle of nature. They
753 have no order of priesthood, but are not altogether exempt
793 from the juggles of priestcraft. They have no symbols of true faith, neither do they know any distinction of days or
[796] seasons.

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)



[ca. 1870]

he was carried into the white man's country and that they gave him to a great monster, with wings, that lived upon the mighty waters at the place where the sun rises, and it had flown away with him. This was a long time ago. 'Our people think white men bad medicine.'"

The Comanches believe in a Supreme Being, and in many minor deities —that is, in the manifestation of a supernatural power in the operations of nature. Their religious ideas, if such a term may be allowed, are of the vaguest character. They bury their dead, with great secrecy, and place in their graves weapons and food. They believe in the immortality of man, and picture a fair paradise beyond the boundary of time. They have few ceremonies of a religious character. For the dead, they offer prayers at the rise of the sun. With their faces turned toward the rising orb of day, over the graves of their departed friends, they set up a howl sufficient to strike terror to the heart of one unaccustomed to hear them. They are not a happy people. Like all aborigines, they are grave, taciturn and moody.

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*Lyon's Kathairon*

*For Preserving and Beautifying the Human Hair, to Prevent Its Falling Out and Turning Gray.*

*A well preserved Head of Hair, in a person of middle age, at once bespeaks refinement, elegance, health and beauty. It may truly be called Woman's Crowning Glory, while men are Not insensible to its advantages and charms. Few things are more disgusting than thin, frizzly, harsh, untamed Hair, with head and coat covered with dandruff. Visit a barber and you feel and look like a new man. This is what LYON'S KATHAIRON will do all the time. The charm which lies in well placed Hair, Glossy Curls, Luxuriant Tresses, and a Clean Head, is noticeable and irresistible.*

Missouri Republican, *November 8, 1872*

27: St. Clair & Lowie U,E-4,5 (no date) 1909
NO6 Comanche NO6



539 warm." Coyote said, "Six cold months would be too much, we should suffer from the cold. Ten summer months would be good." Another man said, "If we had ten summer months, our meat would spoil, we should suffer from heat." Then they debated. One little man sitting by the door, who was named Snow-Bird, said, "Well, let us have six cold months, with one month half cold and one half cool." Coyote was in favor of ten hot months, because he wished to play a trick on them. They were debating. The little man by the door got up, and said, "Six cold months is plenty for us." Saying, "Six months," he went out. All the assembly rose and followed him, repeating, "Six months." Coyote bade them wait. "What makes you pay any attention to that little man?" But the people did not listen to Coyote, who was thus unable to work his scheme on them. He went out last of all, saying, "We shall have six winter months." All the people laughed at him. "This is the first time you have failed to have your way," Coyote said, "Now we shall have six cold months. Now, then, let us have another council to name the months." When they had gathered, he announced, "The little man shall have just as many tongues as there are cold months." Then he named the months: "October, November, December, January, February, March, April." All agreed. "The little man will have seven tongues; every month one of his tongues will pass away until but one is left."[1]

After the council was over, Coyote said, "Now, do all of you go over there! I shall join you, and we will decide whether our dead should return after the lapse of four days. Long ago that was our way. To-day I object to our dead coming back." They met. He called them all to the edge of the water. He picked up a rock, held it in his hand, and spoke as follows: "Behold, our dead people shall do as this rock!" He cast it into the water. "This rock will not come back. Similarly, our people will not return. This earth is very large; but if the dead were to come back, it would get crowded. That is why I object to it." All the people agreed with him. Since then our dead have not returned.

### 17. THE LIBERATION OF BUFFALO[2]

*(Comanche Story)*

Long ago two persons owned all the buffalo. They were an old woman and her young cousin. They kept them penned up in the mountains, so that they could not get out. Coyote came to these people. He summoned the Indians to a council. "That old woman will not give us anything. When we come over there, we will plan how to release

[1] Compare Culin, *Free Museum of Science and Art, Bulletin*, 1901, p. 20 (Wind River Shoshone).

[2] Grinnell, *l. c.* p. 145; Kroeber, *l. c.* p. 65; Dorsey and Kroeber, *Traditions of the Arapaho*, p. 276.

/page 39 continued/

consider here how the attitudes toward peyote itself have changed. The meeting as I have seen it conforms in most details to the descriptions given by Mooney, LaBarre, and Slotkin, allowing of course for regional variations. On the other hand there seems to be a marked change in the effects of peyote. Less importance is attached to the vision and there is hardly any evidence of people passing out, etc.

Many of the older peyotists also had power of the older sort and even John Pahdoponi and Bill Saupitty have been healers apart from their peyote functions. I have asked concerning the fate of the old forms of power working on the supposition that if it were real it would not have dissappeared into thin air in the minds of the present day peyotists. It seems that power came to an individual through the intervention of the supernatural being in those specific situations we may call quests. Due to the coming of the White culture, the proper conditions for the quest were destroyed, i.e., sanctified areas, silence, natural surroundings. The Wichita Mountains were the traditional areas for receiving power. The bands did not camp in the mountains, nor did they travel through them on their way to raid or war. This holy ground was open for small day light excursions (berry picking, etc.) and for inter-tribal travel along the "peace trail". Other than these activities the area was respected as holy and used only for the search for power. In spite of the changes since the White inroads, many of the mountains are considered haunted and ghosts still abound in popular Comanche and Kiowa parlance. The older Indians do not travel far into the mountains and do not camp out there. Dreams are still a great topic of interest in spite of the fact that they cannot confer power. One is liable to dream more often and more vividly while in the mountains. The dream is still able to impart a message if the dreamer is able to interpret it.

Peyote, in the early days, also had power. This because of its manifest healing properties and because of the visions one could

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175 man, if he was fortunate, could become a peace chief, but a peace chief possessed
178 no real authority and functioned most importantly as a mediator in the disputes
624 which arose among the younger men.

175 With the greater food supply offered by the seemingly boundless bison
178 herds, hunting magic decreased in importance. Antelope magic did persist from
224 the Shoshone heritage. The more favorable living conditions and constant food
[789] supply also allowed the individual bands, which had retained their Basin character-
621 istics, to become larger and to achieve a greater degree of independence from their
[222] sister bands. The emphasis on the buffalo as a food source also tended to decrease the importance of gathering and exploitation of the floral environment for food. Further, the Comanches made little or no use of fish and of such small game as rabbits (Lowie 1954:6).

175 The Basin Shoshone practice of infanticide disappeared as the family group
178 could more efficiently care for its offspring. The practice of enculturating slaves
[847] and captives became common among the Comanches in order to augment their
727 numbers and specifically to free males for hunting and warfare. The stress on
562 war and hunting also tended to debase the position of women, and such practices
593 as the mutilation of wives, a custom which had never occurred in Basin Shoshone
309 culture, came into practice.

175 Patterns of religious belief and behavior also underwent certain changes
178 from Basin life to the Plains. A vaguely defined belief in a Great Spirit persisted,
771 as did the relative lack of concern with the afterlife. However, the intense fear of
776 ghosts held by the Basin Shoshone diminished in the Comanche Plains culture.
775 Also, the practice of power transmission from individual to individual, instead
778 of power source to individual, developed in importance. The decrease in ghost
793 fear and, it is assumed, witchcraft in Comanche culture, as opposed to the Basin
795 culture, was greatly facilitated by the lessening of intrasocial tensions and the
578 Comanches' ability, through warfare, to turn aggressions outward and away from
721 the primary group. As a whole, Comanche religious patterns were exceedingly
796 simple and lacking in elaborate ceremonialism and ritual, at least compared to their Plains neighbors (Hoebel 1940:83).

175 The Comanches possessed characteristics, other than their paucity of
171 ceremonialism, which served to differentiate them from other Plains tribes. The
621 Comanche bands were more self-managing than bands found among other Plains
575 groups. Warrior societies, a diagnostic trait of Plains culture, were lacking in
796 Comanche society except in the most rudimentary form. The Sun Dance was not
291 a vital aspect of Comanche culture. Decoration of clothing with beads, quills, and ornaments of bone, shell, and metal was deemphasized, while heavy fringing
[342] of the garments was the rule. The Comanche tepee was built on a four-pole base like that of the Blackfoot, Sarsi, Ute, and Shoshone; while the Comanches' historic neighbors, such as the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa-Apache used a three-pole foundation (Lowie 1954:33).

721 By the early nineteenth century the bison herds were greatly diminished
[224] on the south Plains, and the Comanches increasingly turned to raiding to augment their economy. During this period the Comanches raided New Mexico, the Santa Fe Trail, northern Texas, and Old Mexico, sometimes as far south as Durango.

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ceremony was similar, in its essentials, to the following description given by Sanapia of the blessing by her grandmother:

> One morning she told my mother, "This morning I'm going to bless my granddaughter. I want to fix it. I want my son to go out there and build a fire and when it turns to coals he could bring me some." And she had a little iron bucket, you know, and she said, "Put that big coal in this iron and bring it into my tepee. I want to bless her so she could live a long time and help people. And then she going to have children. And whatever she wants, anything at all, she's going to get it . . . easy way . . . she won't have to work, she won't have to do nothing." That's what she said, and then she blessed me. I was pretty good size, about fourteen I guess. She blessed me with all what she said and then she put cedar on them coals and she pray and sing. Then she put her hand on my head and I inhale that cedar and she fan it on my legs and arms, all over my body. She would sing a song and then she prayed some more. And you know, in them days I never did know how they prayed, but she would pray and she said, "You, I don't know what you are, but I want you to bless this little girl so she can grow up and live to be an old lady like me. You, the one who go in the night and watch people, I don't know who you are, but you're like that, bless her. And this earth, I want her to walk on you for many, many years. I want her to be strong and healthy and I want her to live many years." And after she got through, she took that red paint and put water in it and rubbed it like that. Just smeared it all on my face, and rubbed it from my knees down to the bottom of my feet. Then she said, "Now, she's going to stand on this earth. This paint comes from the earth and she's going to stand on it. And she's going to live long life after she gets old. Help peoples. And when she gets real old, and her hair turns gray and white and her teeth fall out, well, that's when she's going to die." That's what she told me.

In the early 1900s a flu epidemic struck the Comanches. Sanapia was afflicted, and her maternal uncle was summoned to treat her. It was during this treatment that the uncle gave his consent by including phrasing in his standard blessing ceremony at the termination of treatment which meant that Sanapia would regain her health only if she would devote her life to the profession of doctoring. Frightened by this bit of "blackmail," Sanapia promised that she would always strive to be a good woman and a good doctor. As a symbol of her promise, the uncle gave her a new name, "Memory Woman," signifying that Sanapia should never forget the oath made to her uncle as a condition for her regained health.

The next to give consent was the grandfather, but the final and most crucial consent needed was that of the mother. It was given early in the last year of training. With the mother's blessing–consent, the actual transfer of power began. This transference of supernatural power from the mother would progress through four stages, culminating in Sanapia's four days and nights of solitary meditation. The four-day ordeal, or vision quest, signals the termination of training, for it is at this time that the neophyte eagle doctor's power is tested during the period of solitary meditation as the ghosts converge on him in an attempt to frighten and harass him to the point that he will renounce his Medicine. In other words, even with the consent of the teacher and the three advisers, the actual fait accompli is ultimately the outcome of a kind of mystical combat between the

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malevolent spirits of the dead and the Medicine of the potential eagle doctor. Kardiner's (1945:93) observation that, among the Comanche, "Medicine" is merely a euphemism for "courage" is pertinent, for the ghost's major weapon against the neophyte doctor is fear. It is interesting that although the behavior engaged in during these four days and nights of solitude is similar to the general pattern of Plains vision questing, Sanapia conceives of this time as merely a final test and not a time when a supernatural patron could have possibly appeared to her and granted her certain supernatural prerogatives. The apparition of her patron, the eagle, would come later in her career as a doctor. In the beginning of her doctoring career, the powers which she possessed came strictly from a personal power transmission from her mother and uncle to her. Sanapia feels that visitations from either the eagle, or at times from the spirits of her mother and uncle, are gifts granted her as a reward for her faith and conscientious endeavors as a doctor.

## Power Transmission

The first stage in the actual power transmission from the mother was concerned with instilling power into Sanapia's mouth and hands, the areas of the body where an eagle doctor's powers are most strongly represented. The rituals involved with this first phase of transmission are very similar to the blessing ceremony, at least in the introductory stages. Sanapia's brother was told by the mother to lay a fire of pecan wood. After the wood burned to coals, the brother brought the coals to a secluded place where Sanapia and her mother waited. The mother sat facing east, and Sanapia was instructed to sit facing her, while the mound of coals burned between them. Sanapia was cedared[1] and fanned by her mother with the standard blessings of long life and good health. This blessing also included the mother's singing of her Medicine song, an action which serves to call the *puhakut*'s power sources to his service. The mother, using her bare hand, then plucked a live coal from the mound of embers and handed it to Sanapia. At first, Sanapia reports, she balked at placing the burning coal in her hand, but at her mother's insistence she took it and was amazed that it did not burn her. She was then instructed to rub the coal over her hands. Once again the similarity in the concepts of "Medicine" and "courage" appear. Today, Sanapia interprets the handling of live coals as an act of faith in the doctor, a necessary first step in testing the potential doctor's resolve.

> I was sure scared then . . . almost got up and ran away. I was only a young girl at that time, you know. But, when I took them coals on my hand, inside and outside my hand I felt a chill, maybe. Oh, it was like chills in my hands. That has the meaning that power was in there . . . working in my hands. Felt like it would go up my arm even.

[1] The dried leaves of the red cedar are sprinkled on live coals, and the rising smoke is wafted over the person who is being blessed.

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eggs, but it always feel like I'm choking in here and I just quit eating them. And now I can't get the taste out of my mouth. I'll have it all day long. I just can't eat them. 115 159 756 784

Sanapia's maternal uncle gave her but one "rule." She was forbidden to eat the visceral organs of animals. This was a bitter pill for Sanapia because of her love for liver and an Indian delicacy made from stuffed intestines. She has managed to circumvent this tabu by reinterpreting it. Sanapia feels that if she changes these forbidden meats into something else, disguises them, she can eat them with no fear or guilt. 262

A *puhakut* cannot doctor himself in the manner which was described regarding the removal of the eagle egg. This is unfortunate for Sanapia, for as she grows older, the tabus which she must observe become increasingly cumbersome; and since she is the only living eagle doctor, she has no way in which to relieve herself of these restrictions. This is also a reason for her disinclination to associate with the less traditionally based members of the Comanche tribe. The more conservative and traditional Comanches recognizing the special limitations which are placed on Sanapia's behavior and, honoring them, make her life a little less complicated. With the less traditionally oriented, Sanapia cannot be sure that they understand the meaning of her tabus, and thus she must be constantly on guard around them lest they pass behind her while she is eating, for example, and unknowingly, or perhaps knowingly, cause her to break one of the many restrictions placed on her with regards to food and behavior. Sanapia states that ignorance is no excuse when a "rule" is broken. Her tabus are mechanical. 115 159 756 784 184

The unique feature in the third power transmission was Sanapia's acquisition of her Medicine song. The Medicine song is Sanapia's most direct means of communication to the supernatural realms which are the ultimate sources of her power. The song belonged to both the mother and the uncle. Sanapia considers her Medicine song extremely potent and utilizes it only under the most critical and pressing of doctoring situations. It is not a common element in her doctoring activities but is only employed when she feels that all her other tactics are failing. The song is her ultimate doctoring tool in that it is as close as she comes to actually commanding her power sources to heed her wishes. 115 159 756 533 755 [778]

The immediate result of her Medicine song is the summoning of the spirits of her mother and uncle. She then asks them for support in her attempts to reach more deeply into the supernaturalistic realms for more power and control over the situation which is challenging her. 115 159 756 533 755 775

When my mother gave me that song she told me, "When you come by yourself like that, when you don't have no place to go for help, when you got no one to lean on for help, sing this song. What you want, you going to get. I'll be listening to you. When you sing this song, I'm going to hear you singing and I'm going to help you." 787

Two tabus concerned with behavior were associated with the power increase of this third stage. Sanapia was forbidden to ever directly make a request of another. Her powers would, according to her mother, allow her to obtain anything 115 159 756 784 195

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she desired simply by wishing for it. Sanapia evades the strictures of this tabu by circumlocutions when her daily routine dictates that she must ask an individual for some object or assistance.

The second "rule" which she acquired at this stage required that she must always be alone when she doctors. Once again, Sanapia views this as a recognition of the potential dangers which excessive supernatural powers possess for humans. The only individuals who could possibly be with her while she doctors are other eagle doctors or persons who Sanapia feels have Medicine which would protect them against the dangers of supernatural contamination.

Kardiner (1945:64) makes a comment relevant at this point when writing on the subject of Comanche notions of power and magic.

> Another interesting point in connection with power, probably unique with the Comanches, is that power might be obtained from the ghosts of medicine men. This was obtained through sleeping by the grave of the medicine man, not moving all night, no matter what terrifying thing happened. The ghost would then transfer the power asked for. Sometimes the sleeper would have a vision; in this the ghost did not come in human form but as a great wind and then a giant bird, which conveyed to him the power that he wanted.

Sanapia's discussion of the later stages of her training agrees with Kardiner's statement in general; however, some major divergences appear. Sanapia, through her Medicine song, is able to summon the spirits of her mother and uncle to her aid. She does not consider their appearance as the apparition of ghosts, however. To Sanapia, ghosts are totally evil entities. Ghosts are also unable to appear in human form since, in her opinion, their human forms decomposed at the place of their interment. Her mother and uncle appear to her looking exactly as they did during the time of her training. When they appear, they do not speak but rather employ hand signs to tell Sanapia that they have come to her aid.

She does not mention a Medicine man's grave as the location of the inevitable struggle with the ghosts, and she definitely does not feel that power is transmitted to her from ghosts. She does agree generally with Kardiner's mention of a "giant bird" as one of her power sources, though she does not believe that the Medicine bird is actually a ghost in another form.

In reiteration, Sanapia states that she received her initial powers through her mother and maternal uncle, and only later in her life was she honored with visitations by the eagle, her patron and guardian spirit. The four days and nights of seclusion and meditation, in her opinion, are in actuality a final test of a new doctor's ability to withstand the attacks of ghosts, and not a time when he is in a position to acquire further powers from a supernatural patron.

## Final Test

Sanapia failed her final test. After her mother had explained to her what she could expect during her four-day ordeal, Sanapia was too frightened to go through with the vigil. She would spend the daylight hours sitting on the hill

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## Visitations from the Medicine Eagle

115 159 756 825 787 [533] Sanapia has had only two visitations from her supernatural eagle patron in her doctoring career. Both occurred during doctoring situations as a direct result of the singing of her Medicine song. Sanapia reports that her Medicine eagle looks like eagles she has seen in the wild except that it is much larger. She can feel her eagle's presence before she sees it. On the first occasion she felt a rush of air from its wings, and on the second it was a tingling sensation which announced the presence of the Medicine eagle. Sanapia states that when the eagle came to her, everything around her dissappeared with the resultant image: an eagle against a murky gray background. These visitations were very brief. During the eagle's apparition, it appeared to be hovering directly in front of her at a distance of about 4 or 5 feet. While the eagle was present, Sanapia trembled violently and perspired freely. She states that her heart beat very rapidly and she felt as if she was going to faint.

## Contacts with the Supernatural

115 159 756 787 [775] Sanapia has provided herself with several contacts with the supernatural worlds. Since she cannot visit the other worlds, Sanapia must depend on these contacts to assist her in making her wishes known to the supernatural realms. Her comments concerning her Medicine song clearly identify the spirits of her mother and maternal uncle as her two major assistants. It should also be remembered that she considers her Medicine song as her most potent piece of doctoring paraphernalia. The spirit–man in her recurring real dreams is also a liaison or avenue of rapport between Sanapia and the supernatural, though in this case it is strictly a one-way phenomenon which is beyond Sanapia's control.

115 159 756 787 533 775 Sanapia's eagle comes to her only through the intercession of her mother and uncle via Sanapia's Medicine song. She associates her lack of courage in the final phase of her doctor training with her inability to call the eagle to her aid independently of her mother's and uncle's intercession. This is also the reason why Sanapia possesses only one Medicine song instead of the many which her mother and uncle possessed. In the final analysis, Sanapia can rarely act independently as a doctor; she must call on the assistance of her teachers. Therefore, instead of having many songs for summoning power, she has one. She must first call on her mother and uncle and then relate to them her wishes, which they, through their superior powers, actualize. Basically, then, Sanapia's real power is the control which she can exert over the powerful spirits of two *puhakuts*. However, this type of analysis is foreign to Sanapia. She prefers to think of herself as the pitiable supplicant.

115 159 756 787 755 Peyote is another important liaison with supernatural powers. The power she receives from peyote is the only power which she can manipulate entirely independently of the spirits of her mother and uncle. Still, the power of peyote is subordinate to the powers possessed by the spirits of her mother and uncle,

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and in her most difficult doctoring situations and in all her most criticial moments, it is to the spirits of her teachers that she turns for aid. 115 159 756 787 755

## The Supernatural Universe

Sanapia's description of the supernatural universe is full of contradictory elements. This is not as great an obstacle to action as it may seem since she addresses each element individually as the situation demands. She has no need to attempt to grasp the entirety of this universe at once. Sanapia is able to select from her potpourri of supernaturalistic notions the ones which best suit a particular occasion. 115 159 756 775

She believes that living human beings share the earth with the ghosts, or malevolent spirits of deceased humans who, alive, led evil lives. The ghosts can enter into the world of men, but men cannot enter the world of ghosts except through death. Also, somewhere, neither in the plane of living man nor in the plane of ghost existence, is the realm of pure, unembodied supernatural power. Such entities as the sun, the earth, and the eagle are able to tap this power and thus possess it to a greater extent than can mortal men. Power can be acquired by men only through secondhand channels and never from its source. A mortal would be killed if exposed to pure power. The power, from its original source, is inexhaustible. 115 159 756 778

In yet another plane of existence are found the spirits of good men such as the disciples of Jesus and the spirits of Sanapia's mother and uncle. This realm is not quite like heaven, which is the abode of God and Jesus and the eternal home of those ordinary souls who have nothing to offer the world of the living, as do the spirits of Medicine men or the disciples of Jesus. Hell is somewhere deep in the earth. Sanapia believes that it is the special eternal home of evil white men. Her notions of the nature of hell follow the standard Christian concept. 115 159 756 775 776 772 177

Peyote is similar to the sun or the eagle in its ability to embody an extraordinary degree of supernatural power. However, unlike the sun or the eagle, peyote comes from the Christian God as a sign of his love for all Indian people. According to Sanapia, the sun has existed longer then the Christian God, and is therefore entirely self-sufficient. 115 159 756 755 778 776

Thus Sanapia can become more or less Christian, peyotist, or Plains shaman as varying situations present themselves. By not assigning a negative value to contradictory elements in her supernaturalistic universe and by oversimplifying the similarities, Sanapia possesses a flexibility which confounds any attempt to present a very cogent description of her "religion." If a key pervasive theme had to be chosen, it probably would be concerned with the idea of supernatural power and the desirability of its acquisition and control. 115 159 756 771 778

## A Successor

At the present time Sanapia is beginning to consider the problem of a successor, for she feels that her doctoring career is rapidly approaching its final 115 159 756 593

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someone must pour a ladle of water over each of his hands four times. The one who pours the water over the hands of the one contaminated and who aids in the cedaring may be any person present except, of course, a small child or a menstruating woman.

Sanapia forbids children near her medicines because she feels that such close proximity could make a child sick, cause him bad luck, or possibly kill him. She is not quite sure why the medicine could hurt a child, but she is sure about another aspect of the danger which her medicines present to children. Her special and unique power is ghost Medicine. She feels that ghosts therefore hate her and are constantly attempting to harm her and those close to her. This means that they are very likely near her most of the time, especially when she is working her Medicine against them or the results of their activity. Though they cannot harm her or adults who have courage to resist them, they can harm children, who are naturally weaker than adults in courage and Medicine.

With respect to her aversion to the presence of menstruating women while she is doctoring or when her medicines are open, she can offer no specific rationale except that these were the instructions she received from her mother. The only possible explanation which she felt she could offer is that loss of blood means weakness, and weakness makes an individual more susceptible to illness caused by supernatural or natural means.

Wallace and Hoebel (1952:158) write that among the Comanche all medicine had to be protected against contamination by grease as well as the presence of menstruating women. It is interesting that Sanapia is not concerned about the possible ill effects of grease near her medicines. In fact, when directly questioned about her reaction if her medicines actually came in contact with grease, she replied that she would simply wipe it off.

## Nonbotanical Medicines

Approximately half of the contents of Sanapia's medicine kit is composed of medicines of a nonbotanical nature.

### *Crow Feathers*

Four tail feathers from a crow are tied at their base to form a loose bundle and are hung near the door of a house as a protective amulet against ghosts. Sanapia states that the power in the crow feathers is intrinsic to the feathers and does not depend on her handling of them to give them this capacity. She always utilizes this amulet when she doctors because of her belief that ghosts are especially numerous when she begins to make Medicine against them. This amulet, therefore, aids her to dispel ghosts and acts to protect the house and its occupants from the evil designs of the angered ghosts.

Sanapia could offer no explanation as to why the ghost should fear these feathers. A Kiowa informant, who uses crow feathers in much the same manner as Sanapia, explained that ghosts sometimes appear at night as owls. The crow and the owl are natural enemies. By using crow feathers in this manner, one is en-

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listing the crow's aid against the owls or ghosts. Sanapia, however, does not share her Kiowa and Apache neighbor's aversion to owls. 778 237 775 171 825

> You know, these Apaches sure are crazy. They get scared of them owls . . . they might hear them holler or something. It ain't nothing but a funny bird. A bird can't hurt nobody and they think it's a ghost.

### *Glass Slivers*

Slivers of glass, usually obtained from broken beer bottles, are used by Sanapia whenever a certain treatment calls for the making of incisions in the flesh. This operation is almost always immediately succeeded by the use of the sucking horn or by suction applied by mouth. 756 755 757

Several examples will adequately explain the function of these slivers of brown glass. For both a severe headache and extreme vertigo the same procedure is followed. Minute cuts are made at either temple, in the middle of the forehead, and immediately below the hairline at the nape of the neck. These incisions are approximately one-sixteenth of an inch in length and penetrate only deep enough to produce a blood flow. The sucking horn is applied after all the cuts have been made, and sucking is continued from point to point around the head until both Sanapia and the patient are satisfied with the results.

Sanapia believes that "bad blood," or "foamy stuff," causing pressure in the head area is the cause of both conditions. To relieve the symptoms, the blood or foamy stuff, must be removed. The same notion of pain caused by the pressure of expanding foamy stuff stimulates the use of the cutting operation in the treatment of swollen joints, which Sanapia calls "rheumatism" in the absence of evidence indicating breaks or sprains. 753

Sanapia specifies the use of only brown glass in an attempt to imitate her mother. The mother utilized what, from Sanapia's description, appear to have been brown flintlike slivers as cutting tools in doctoring. Sanapia does not know how to obtain "cutting rocks" so she employs brown glass as a close approximation.

### *Sucking Horn*

Sanapia's sucking horn is a 4-inch section of the horn casing of a variety of domestic cattle found in her vicinity. The 4-inch section is cut from the point or extremity of the horn. This piece of horn is usually drilled and scoured to develop a clear opening from the tip of the segment of horn, which will be used as the mouthpiece, to the termination of the horn or area of widest diameter, which will be the point of application when the horn is employed in doctoring. 237

This item is used when the treatment calls for Sanapia to attempt to suck sickness from the body of her patient. She recalls that when she was young, the sucking horn was used very little by the Comanche doctors which she had the opportunity to observe. If the treatment called for suction, the doctor employed his mouth. Sanapia believes that it was with the advent of the white man and his teaching that many diseases are spread and caught via the mouth that Comanche doctors began to depend more on the sucking horn in an effort to keep their mouth from contact with the patient. 177

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*Black Kerchief*

Sanapia keeps most of her medicines wrapped in pieces of black material which are commercially sold as women's head scarfs. These large black squares of cloth are also used by some males as Western-style ties. When Sanapia is traveling without her medicine kit, though carrying her Medicine feather, she keeps it wrapped in a black kerchief.

The black kerchief, worn knotted at the throat, is a customary sign among the Comanches and neighboring tribes of a possessor of Medicine. Sanapia was instructed to always wear the black kerchief as a symbol of her powers. She does not wear this badge today for fear of ridicule. Sanapia does, however, keep a black kerchief tied to the headboard of her bed. She states that black is the color of luck and good fortune. She also adds that it indicates to ghosts that the wearer is not afraid of their powers.

The black kerchief, or piece of black cloth, can be used in doctoring to cover the patient's face when he is instructed to inhale medicine smoke. Sanapia sometimes uses the black kerchief in this manner during the doctoring of ghost sickness.

*Sanapia collecting medicines, 1967.*

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Sanapia refers to all other varieties of *Juniperus* as *taiβowa:pi*, or "white man cedar." She uses the dried and pulverized root to make a decoction which is internally administered to treat menstrual complaints. However, to Sanapia, the dried and rubbed leaves of the cedar are the most important parts of the plant. She sprinkles them on live coals, which are always formed from pecan twigs, to produce a thick aromatic smoke which is inhaled by patients suffering from ghost sickness, vertigo, or severe headache. The cedar smoke is also fanned over an individual by Sanapia in her blessing ceremony, a prominent aspect of all her doctoring activities. She uses the cedar medicine smoke in any instance when she is called upon to dispel the influences of the ghosts. When she is commissioned to ritually cleanse a house in which a death has recently occurred, she employs cedar smoke as a central core in this activity. When an individual is plagued by thoughts of a deceased relative, Sanapia prescribes a fumigation of the home with cedar smoke. She also strongly urges "cedaring" of the sleeping area before retiring at night.

> Only use that red berry kind . . . get it on those slick hills west of here. They say when you use that cedar and they smell it, it blows all that bad stuff and pain away from you with that smoke. It keeps you well, and you won't ever be scared or nothing. Lot of different ways it help you like that. It's green, and its living all the time. In winter, summer, anytime. I don't care when. It's got Medicine for that. That's why I use it.

*natsa"ksi*

"sneezing medicine" *Helinium microcephalum* (sneezeweed)

This plant is collected in the early fall. The flowers are detached and allowed to dry. When dried, the flowers are crushed and inhaled through the nose to produce the desired violent sneezing.

Sneezing medicine is administered to patients suffering from heart "flutter," low blood pressure, and head and nasal congestion. In Sanapia's opinion, the sneezing stimulated by this medicine keeps the heart beating steadily and strongly, thus maintaining the proper blood pressure. Also, she has the notion that in old age the heart becomes loosened from the cavity in which it is supposed to be housed. The violent sneezing caused by this medicine is capable of shocking the heart back into its proper position.

For those suffering from sinus congestion or head colds, Sanapia makes a very effective "inhaler" out of a small bottle or can. The container is half filled with the sneezing medicine. The patient is directed to shake the container, remove the lid, and inhale the dust when he is suffering from head congestion. Sanapia got the idea for her inhaler from commercials for cold remedies which she has seen on television. Many of her ideas concerning the nature of head and chest congestion and especially colds stem from notions absorbed from viewing television commercials. She uses terms like "bronmicha" for "bronchial" and "simus" for "sinus." The bronmicha is everything in the chest cavity except the lungs and

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# 4

# Ghosts and Ghost Sickness

## Comanche Attitudes toward Ghosts

WALLACE AND HOEBEL (1952:173) write concerning the Comanches' attitudes toward ghosts: "Ghosts did not generally bother the Comanches, but the Comanches were definitely uneasy about them." Kardiner (1945:84) states that the Comanches have no ghost fear at all. I found that not only did my older Comanche informants feel uneasy about ghosts but in most cases they were terrified by them. In almost every interview with a Comanche informant, some situation was cited that dealt with the horrors which ghosts are capable of afflicting on the living.

Sanapia states that the whirlwinds, or "dust devils," common in southern Oklahoma are the only form which the ghosts take which is entirely visible to the human eye. In addition this is the only form by which the ghost will make his presence known during daylight hours. The nocturnal guise of the ghost is probably humanlike, in Sanapia's opinion, though she states that she has never seen a ghost at night. This fact is irksome to her because she believes herself to be an expert on the matter of ghosts and their behavior among the Comanches. She considers the lack of this experience as a major flaw in her background, though she accounts for it by mentioning the fear which her Medicine inspires in ghosts. The following is her description of an attempt she made to meet a ghost:

> I tried it on a real dark night. I took my flashlight and walked from here to the highway. The darkest night. That's what I supposed to do because the ghost hates me and I hate it. He ain't never going to do nothing to me because I'm going to overpower that ghost. I could kill it, and the things that it done to a person. He won't do that to me because I got that Medicine. So I walk here to the highway the darkest night. They say there's ghost on the road, but I never did see any. I went to the highway, and then I come back. I just wanted to try. If there was a ghost, I never did hear one, I never see one. Nothing touch me, nothing in my way. I just wanted to see how it was for them to scare

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775 a person . . . see how it is for it to scare me, but I didn't feel nothing. Nothing didn't scare me at all.

Sanapia feels that ghosts are probably the spirits of deceased persons who led evil lives and who are therefore doomed to wander the earth forever. Good people, according to Sanapia, probably go to the Christian heaven. She is not quite sure. Ghosts tend to remain near people and things which were familiar to them when they were alive. However, no particular correspondence between ghosts and certain deceased relatives exists. Ghosts are generally described as being "jealous hearted." They are jealous of the living.

Sometimes you be sleeping. They comes around and they just put something . . . dirt on your face. Or the whirlwind, they say that it is a ghost. It goes around and . . . supposing you be out there by yourself and here comes a whirlwind [753] and just pass you like that. It don't often do that to anybody . . . just once in awhile it do that to somebody, and it twist their face. When I see them whirlwinds coming to me I say, "You go that way. Leave me alone," and it does it because I got that power. Or else sometimes people get scared when they laying in bed at night and one of those people of the family dies and the Indians say they get jealous of the one that are living in that house . . . either their sister or their son or their aunt or anything like that. They get jealous because they living and he died. And they the ones that come bother you like that. Sometimes they come in and you hear them just walking. They open the door and come in and come to your bed and they jerk your covers off or either just pull [753] your hair like that or hold your hand. That's when they do that to you . . . twist your face.

Sanapia is not consistent in her statements concerning belief in the existence of ghosts. She feels certain of the existence of some kind of malevolent spirit which causes ill effects to those human to which it appears, but she is not sure [171] that these ghosts are actually the spirits of men who were once alive. The Cheyenne, for example, felt that ghosts were derived from the dead but that they were not related to a specific dead individual (Hoebel 1960:86). Perhaps Sanapia's relations in Cheyenne-Arapaho culture have caused her to be ambivalent on point. At one time she will state that ghosts are the spirits of the deceased who while alive led evil lives, and at other times she will make statements such as the following:

Some of them would hear noises in the dark and think they see things . . . ghosts. That's what they think. I just think its their imagination . . . that's what. Because when anybody dead, they're gone. They ain't going to come back. How can they?

## Ghost Sickness

775 The particular horror of the ghost is his ability to deform his victims,
753 usually by causing contortions of the facial muscles and in some instances paralysis of hands and arms. This condition is called "ghost sickness," or "twisted face," by

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Sanapia. The Comanche name for ghost sickness is *bedeyai*, which Sanapia translates as "ghost done it." She describes the condition in this manner: 775 753

> You seen them, I guess. Their face get all twisted up on one way, and their eyes might get twisted up on the left side and their mouth would twist around too. Their eyes run all the time and they can't hardly see. You can see the gums in their mouth and the teeth. They get to slobbering so bad that they got to hold a rag over their mouth. Sometimes their hands get bent up and their arms get turned around and they be shaking sometimes. Oh! they stink when they get it, just like dead persons. I'll tell you, when you doctor someone with twisted face, its the most nasty thing you could do. You have to put your mouth right on it. 775 753 169

Usually, the ghosts do their harm to individuals whom they find outside and alone at night. The following is an example, from a Comanche informant, of a very standardized account of ghost contact. This tale, with only slight variations, was also collected from Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache informants. 775 753 [171]

> We was up around Fletcher picking pecans one afternoon. It started getting late, but we didn't notice because we were having a good time. And the sun went down, so I told that bunch I was with that I was going. I started to walk to my pick-up parked up on the highway. And so I was walking. It was then that I heard something around me. Some sound like somebody walking behind me in the grass. The hair about to stand up on my head, because I knew what it was right then. So I start running. I run, and run, and run. After a time I turn my head to see if I loose it and, bang, it hit me right on this side of my face. It was right behind me every minute I was running. I fell down hard when it happened and seems like I went to sleep or something. When I woke up, it was still dark and my face was chilled-like, you know, it was dead feeling. So I got home after a while and my wife gave a holler when she see me with my face all screwed up like that. I guess it look pretty bad alright. Didn't hurt. It just look bad. We got it fixed up later. Indian doctor fix it up pretty good for me.

A key point to these tales of the appearance of the ghosts and the subsequent contortion of the face of the individual contacted lies in the emotion of fear. In every tale of this nature, the ghost victim states the fear he felt at the sight or sound of the ghost. I also collected several accounts in which the individual contacted by the ghost describes how he managed to control his fear at the appearance of the ghost and thus avoided the ghost contortions. Sanapia is very explicit on this point. She states that the only defense against the ghost is courage. 775 753 152

> You might be walking along, out there someplace, and you hear some sound moving along behind you. If you going to turn around, you got to turn all around, turn your whole body around, and look right at it. See what it is. But if you just turn your head, take a peek, that's when they twist your face. Turn all the way around and look at it and say, "What do you want? Come here, let me see you," or "Go away. You're dead." Say that to it and it's gone. That's the way they do. You got to stand up to that ghost. You got to show it you ain't afraid of it. If you don't, they got you, and they twist you up right now.

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775 753 [756] Sanapia reports that ghost sickness is sometimes called "stroke" by white men. She makes a distinction between the two and will not attempt to doctor someone with a stroke, feeling that this affliction is a white man's disease and therefore the province of white doctors. Sanapia states that persons suffering from ghost sickness exude an offensive odor which is not present in the case of stroke. The ghost-sickness victim also possesses an aura of evil, detectable by Sanapia because of her special powers, which she cannot detect in a patient suffering from [754] a stroke. The visible symptoms of the two can be very similar though. Further, certain effects of witchcraft can be almost identical to the symptomatic traits of ghost sickness; however, with witchcraft Sanapia reports that the victim's eyes do not water and he does not salivate excessively. Also, the contortions of the face and the contractions of the hands and arms usually appear in spasmodic cycles rather than as a relatively constant state of contorted paralysis as in ghost sickness.

775 753 754 756 Wallace and Hoebel (1952:174) make the following statement when discussing Comanche *puhakuts*: "Sorcery with ghost medicine is supposed to cause paralysis." As already mentioned, and as will be more fully discussed in Chapter 5, witching or sorcery by an eagle doctor, a doctor with ghost Medicine, not only causes paralysis but a type of paralysis almost identical to that which appears in ghost sickness. The conclusion seems to follow that a doctor with ghost Medicine, or power greater than ghosts, would have the ability to control the behavior of ghosts in any way that he wished, from dismissing them or their effects on living men to directing them to perform harmful acts to humans. Sanapia does not recognize the connection in the similarity in the symptom of ghost sickness and witch sickness, and she maintains that doctors with her particular powers are only able to cure the effects of the ghost's actions, but they are unable to affect the behavior of ghosts in any way, such as directing them to harm a specific individual.

## Ghost Fear in the Basin and on the Plains

775 [178] In discussing the roots of Comanche culture, it was noted that a lively ghost fear was present among the Basin-Range peoples. When the Comanches moved onto the Plains, this ghost fear apparently disappeared, or, at least its prevalence greatly diminished (Kardiner 1945:84; Wallace and Hoebel 1952: 173). However, my field research has shown that at present the more traditional Comanches possess a prominent ghost-fear complex. What factors can be suggested to explain the deemphasis of ghost fear in the Comanche transition from the Basin to the Plains, and how can its reappearance in twentieth-century Comanche society be accounted for?

775 154 571 Kardiner (1945:94) suggested that ghost fear, and possibly the prevalence of witchcraft, decreased in importance in the transition from Basin to Plains because the Plains Comanches were able to release aggressions and hostility outside the primary group through the institutionalized war complex. My model Basin culture possessed no patterns of warfare through which intrasocially spawned tensions and aggression could be released in such a way that the societal

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fabric would not be torn in the process. Because of the excessive rigors of the environment, emphasis was necessarily placed on cooperation and supportiveness among group members. Perhaps Basin culture ghost-fear beliefs acted as a means by which aggressive antisocial tendencies, stimulated in this potentially tension-ridden society, could be projected, displaced, or transferred outside the group, much as the Plains cultures could direct intragroup motivated anxiety outside the group and toward their enemies through the war complex. The Basin people, lacking warfare patterns and not being able to afford excessive intragroup aggressions or asocial behavior, were able to project their fears, anxieties, tensions, and so forth toward ghosts. This specific type of displacement target is especially effective since it exists outside the realm of living men. Ghosts inhabit another world or plane of existence. Ghosts, besides being something to hate, fear, and aggress against, can also serve to explain misfortune, illness, and those occurrences in life which possess no natural explanations. However, that the ghosts functioned mainly in Basin culture as a means of displacing intrasocially motivated aggressive impulses is strongly suggested by the effectiveness of the Comanche war complex in decreasing ghost fear. Other factors which were doubtless of significance in leading to a decrease in ghost fear among the nomadic Comanches were the highly mobile nature of Comanche society, the more favorable environment of the Plains, the ability to increase geographic distance between group members and bands, and the subsequent ability of the Comanche individual to acquire a greater degree of independence from his primary group.

## The Resurgence of the Ghost Complex

The life style of the nomadic culture, as opposed to the Basin prototype, tended to place heavy emphasis on individual assertiveness, independence, aggressiveness, and physical prowess. These gross aspects of traditional Comanche personality are relevant in understanding the severity of personal and social-cultural tensions which occurred when, in the reservation and postreservation period, the Comanche individual was to a great extent denied the prerogative of expressing himself in the traditional Comanche manner. Simply stated, the dynamic, mobile, and assertive Comanche personality was suddenly penned and confined because it came in conflict with the dominant white society's concept of proper and acceptable personal expression. Traditional Comanche modes of personal expression were not only deemed of negative value by the white society but they were subject to punishment as well. Therefore, certain Comanche personality traits, perfectly acceptable and functional in a culture where aggression, for example, could be released at a distance from the group and with the group approval, were suddenly loosed within the group because of its sudden forced confinement. Add to this the emotionally defined cleavage in Comanche society based on differential acceptance rates of acculturation stimuli between bands, and the presence of a high degree of psychological and sociocultural anxiety and tension in contemporary Comanche society is understandable. The notion of ghosts and their ability to interfere in human affairs has found new vitality among twentieth-century Comanches as they

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157 177 178 775 177 178 775 571 attempt to discover alternative methods of expressing and relieving the potentially dysfunctional emotional states which now plague them.

A further suggestion that the ghost complex among the contemporary Comanches function to relieve intrasocial tensions which have appeared as a result of the myriad influences of the acculturation situation is found in the most recent ethnographic studies of the Comanche, which were obtained by the Santa Fe group in 1933. In all the materials published as a result of this group's work, the Comanches are not mentioned as possessing a great degree of ghost fear. This feature is very obviously present today, however. Since the Comanche "capture" occurred in the late nineteenth century, it can be assumed that a relatively large proportion of the Comanche population living in 1933, at the time of the Santa Fe group's investigation, would be composed of individuals who had actually taken part in the nomandic Comanche culture. The influence of this select group on the Comanche society of the 1930s was no doubt great. Their presence probably served to prolong the existence of traditional values and world view in vital form well into the postreservation-period Comanche generation; this would include the relative absence of ghost fear. At present, however, the majority of Comanches are two to four generations removed from the time of the nomadic Comanche culture, and it is among these people that the ghost complex has found new life and meaning. If the material collected by the 1933 group is indeed correct, it would appear that Comanche's attitudes toward ghosts have developed to their present form only since the 1930s. Sanapia has volunteered the information that the incidences of ghost sickness among the Comanche have been increasing over the last thirty years.

Some of the specific social forces which have been active in Comanche society within this time span and which have no doubt contributed to the resurgence in ghost belief have already been suggested. Conflict between the values of the white and Comanche society, increased intrasocial tensions in Comanche society, and lack of a satisfactory means to displace aggressive socially disruptive forces away from the society must be counted as three major forces [186] toward disequilibrium in Comanche society. To this list can be added racial discrimination and prejudice on the part of white society and to a certain extent on the part of Comanches. Associated with these aspects are the increasing pressures toward assimilation of the Comanche society being exercised by white society. However, while the Comanches are being persuaded that the rewards of the white life style are more desirable than those of Comanche culture, they are in most cases denied the avenues to achieve these rewards. Through all of this, the gap between core traditional Comanche values and the extinct culture upon which these values are based continue to expand, leaving many Comanches in a limbo of apathy, ambivalence, and neurotic marginality.

775 154 571 The contemporary Comanche's belief in ghosts serves to relieve disruptive intrasocial tensions by presenting the members of this society with a means of directing frustrations, hostility, and other emotions of a potentially dysfunctional nature, both to the individual and the group, toward a target outside the culture's boundaries. It is also significant that ghosts are outside the boundaries of white

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society. Therefore the dangers of aggressing toward a source which could effectively retaliate is lessened. Although witch fear serves this same function in some cultures, the particular nature of Comanche witchcraft beliefs precludes its similar use in Comanche society. In Comanche society witchcraft is usually worked by *pubakuss*. Therefore, the individual who may have witched your uncle last month may be the only one who could cure you if you contracted ghost sickness tomorrow.

## Debt to the Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache

It appears very likely that the Comanches borrowed heavily from their Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache neighbor's ghost beliefs to revitalize and supplement their own ghost complex. Possibly, the Comanche ghost complex lost much in complexity and elaboration during the many decades of its relative insignificance among the nomadic Comanches. The contemporary Comanche, Kiowa, and Kiowa-Apache notions of ghosts, their nature, and their effects on the living are very similar in general design. However, Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache ghost beliefs, relative to the Comanche's, seem to be much more systematic, consistent, and elaborated. This view is substantiated by a perusal of some of the relevant field notes of others who have done research among these peoples (Bittle 1967; Freeman 1968). Sanapia's use of a crow feather amulet against ghosts can be presented as a specific example. Sanapia and several other Comanche informants, though feeling that crow feathers act to repel ghosts, could offer no explanation for this peculiar property of the crow feathers. Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache informants, however, were quick to point out that the crow is the natural enemy of the owl, a standard guise of the ghosts. Therefore, crow feathers are magically used to enlist the aid of the crow against the owl. Comanches do not generally hold this notion of the association of the owl with ghosts, though they value crow feathers as protective amulets against ghosts. It appears that the Comanches borrowed the crow feather amulet without borrowing the rationale for its use.

## Habits of Ghosts

Comanche ghost notions are uncomplicated. The following themes appear consistently in the accounts of actual ghost contact, though not so consistently in the idealized ghost lore. The Comanches have defined the ghost's operating hours to that time between sunset and sunrise and its area of operation in the majority of cases to any place that is relatively isolated. Though the ghost can appear during the daylight hours as a whirlwind, I collected no accounts of ghost sickness being contracted during that time. Cedar smoke or cedar leaves serve the Comanches as a totally effective ghost repellent. Thus, it seems that it would be a simple matter to avoid the ghosts: Keep a supply of cedar leaves in your house, and do not wander abroad at night in an isolated area unaccompanied. Yet

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775 154 Comanches still incur ghost sickness and under conditions which they could have voluntarily avoided, conditions in which their culture assures them the ghost will be found. This strongly suggests the possibility that a Comanche may at some period in his life develop the need or desire to contract ghost sickness.

## Preliminaries to the Treatment of Ghost Sickness

775 756 When an individual has contracted ghost sickness and has decided to seek Sanapia's aid in alleviating his distress, he first commissions an intermediary to arrange the initial interview between Sanapia and himself. This step can also be taken by the spouse of a patient. Since Sanapia is an older woman, the liaison should also be an older woman. The preferred intermediary would be a woman who had grown up with Sanapia, for they would be acquainted, would be of the [165] same age and sex, and generally would have the same background. The potential patient pays the older woman to "speak for him." The payment is usually made in money.

The older woman approaches Sanapia with the afflicted person's request for treatment. This meeting is very informal and does not appear to be bound with any ritual behavior. The liaison discovers if Sanapia is accessible, when she would consent to meet with the patient, what kind of payment she would require, and if there are any specific kinds of behavior which Sanapia would require of the patient. It does not follow that a woman who has known Sanapia for a number of years would be able to know the answers to these questions simply from previous experience with Sanapia. Sanapia's accessibility depends on her schedule or proposed activities, as does the time when she would meet with the patient. [165] Although the payment of a doctor is standardized to a degree, Sanapia will perhaps broadly suggest to the liaison that there is something which she needs and which would be readily acceptable as payment. Her opinion of the required deportment of the patient may change as her moods change, or perhaps as a result of a "real dream."

The importance of the liaison is stressed by informants who have been Sanapia's patients. Sanapia does not consider the liaison necessary, though she admits that she likes to know something about the person before he approaches her as a patient. The impression received from interviews with most informants who have been Sanapia's patients was that they really did not know exactly what was demanded of them when they desired to contract the services of a Medicine woman. The liaison also functions as the advisor on the deportment demanded of the patient by a Medicine woman.

775 756 331 376 When the first interview has been arranged and the patient is preparing to visit Sanapia, he makes a point to dress humbly. No jewelry is worn. His clothing should, by its poorness, add to the pitiable and humble image he wishes to present to Sanapia. He also must follow this theme in his conversation with Sanapia. The 775 756 576 patient must act the part of the pitiable supplicant who is throwing himself on Sanapia's mercy and good graces. This is the standard posture utilized in prayers,

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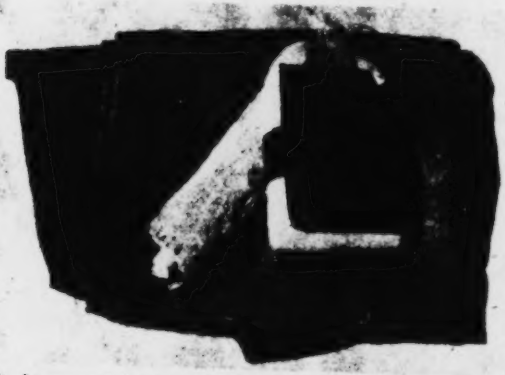

*Ritual payments: four corn shucks, Bull Durham tobacco, and green cloth.*

and in situations in which one individual must make a major request of another. By demeaning yourself to another, you are, in effect, pressuring him to acquiesce to your wishes; for by the Comanche code of generosity if he refused a request presented in such a fashion, he would indeed be a despicable person. A doctor who refused such an approach would be judged even more harshly by his community and his Medicine, for he has made an oath to uphold this code. This type of behavior on the part of the prospective patient acts as a normative pressure in the patient's attempt to contract Sanapia's services.

The formal contract occurs when the patient initiates the ritual involved with his request for Sanapia's aid. The short period of time which passes between the patient's appearance before Sanapia and the beginning of his ritual approach is described by Sanapia as follows:

> He might come here to my house, maybe somewhere else where I'm staying. "Do you know why I'm here?" I tell him, "Yeah. I guess I know why you come to see me." He be looking down at the floor and talking in a pitiful way. I just be sitting there and don't say nothing at first. I know why he's there and I just sit down and wait for him to say what he's got to say . . . just be sitting there quiet. I be watching him all the time.

The patient then produces the demanded items of payment which he has been instructed to bring by his liaison–advisor. This approach ritual payment consists of a piece of dark green cloth, a commercially obtained ⅛-ounce bag of Bull Durham tobacco, and four corn shuck cigarette "papers." The patient rolls a cigarette, takes four puffs, and hands the cigarette to Sanapia. When she takes it, the contract is made. Wallace and Hoebel state: "It is true that the Comanches

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775 smoked for pleasure, but never casually; and when smoking ceremonially, it was
756 an oath, a signature to an agreement, a pledge on the part of the smoker" (1952:
276 180). After Sanapia has taken the cigarette, thus agreeing to the contract, the
775 patient places the green cloth in front of her and lays the Bull Durham and the
756 corn shuck leaves on the cloth.
465 Sanapia states that the requirement of the piece of dark-green cloth follows from the nature of the major medicine which she employs in the treatment of ghost sickness. This type of payment can no doubt be connected with the ritual involved in her collection of *bekwinatsu*, or "swelling medicine." It is necessary for Sanapia to pay the plant with a piece of green cloth before extracting it from the earth.

> The medicine I use, that swelling medicine, got green leaves. The cloth goes with that. That's what the meaning of the dark green goods supposed to be. It stand for that, you might say. That kind of medicine get them well and they paying for it.

775 When Sanapia has accepted the cigarettte and taken the required four
756 puffs, she says to the patient, "Tell me your troubles." The patient then begins
755 to inform Sanapia of the specific reasons that he has sought her aid and generally to unburden himself concerning any and all varieties of "trouble" which he is experiencing. According to Sanapia, this patient monologue can continue for several hours. It is during this outpouring that Sanapia makes her diagnosis or decides exactly what course of action she will pursue regarding the patient.

Sanapia's doctoring ethics forbid her to divulge anything about which a patient has spoken to her. Many of Sanapia's expatients were aware of this fact or were advised of it by their liaisons, and they mentioned "how good it was to talk to that old lady." The patient has a rare opportunity to speak to an old and therefore, it is assumed, wise woman and to know that her supernatural sanctions forbid her to repeat anything she has been told. They are able to gain the counsel of a woman who has had many years experience in listening to these confidential disclosures. The patient also knows that because of the nature of the doctor–patient relationship, Sanapia will only pity him and offer sympathy. It would be considered impolite and improper if Sanapia censured her patient for anything he might say during his monologue.

> What they tell me I ain't supposed to tell anybody. It is so sad sometimes to listen to them. They say horrible things sometimes, but I guess that's because they sick peoples. But they come here and I can get them well. I've helped many people that way.

The psychotherapeutic tenor of Sanapia's doctoring is illustrated by the fact that she bases her diagnosis upon the nature of the emotional ventilation of the patient during his rambling monologue. She does not recognize that she bases her diagnosis on the content of the patient's disclosures but only that she makes her diagnosis after this occurrence. However, it is obvious from the material

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which has been presented and the material still to be presented that Sanapia is very aware of the psychological factor in illness and the necessity of treating psychological as well as physiological symptoms in a patient.

## Treatment of Ghost Sickness

Immediately after this first interview, Sanapia instructs the patient to bathe in the stream which flows west of her house and to change his clothes. The actual treatment will begin after sunrise on the day following the first interview. Between this time and the time of the initiation of treatment, the patient is treated as a guest of Sanapia's household. During this time Sanapia sharpens her first diagnosis by a more thorough examination of the patient. Continual bathing is the only activity which is required of the patient. Since Sanapia will have to apply her mouth to the patient in her doctoring, she instructs him to wash often so he will be as clean as possible when Sanapia begins treatment. The notion of the magical effect of water is also probably present, though Sanapia never directly alluded to this.

Sanapia will doctor her patient three times daily for a period of two days. The treatment will be given at sunrise, midday, and sunset. By the morning of the third day the patient should be cured. Sanapia then blesses him, and the patient is dismissed. If, by the morning of the third day, the patient is not well, Sanapia continues her doctoring through another series of six treatments. After four days if the patient shows no sign of improvement, Sanapia will concede that she has failed in her attempts to cure her patient and will suggest either that he go to the white doctors in Lawton to obtain any comfort which they can supply or that he resign himself to his impending death. However, Sanapia states that even if she knows that her patient is going to die, she will usually not tell him because, as she says, "I can't stand to look at them when I have to say that to them. It makes me feel just so bad that I can't do it." Sanapia's ability to foretell the death of a patient is not solely based on her developed skills at prognosticating from the individual's physical condition. She states that she hears a voice which tells her that absolutely nothing can be done to save her patient.

> I hear, "He's dead right now, he's dead right now." And I know they going to die. I know that part too. They would get up and sit up and talk and walk. Well, they eat their food and drink water and they feel good. But I know that's the last meal they going to have. That's the last drink they going to have.

Before sunrise on the day that she will begin treatment and before she awakens her patient, Sanapia selects and prepares the medicines she will use. She then ties them in a cloth bundle, for she will take them with her when she, accompanied by her patient, goes to make her prayers with the rising sun. She then awakens her patient, prepares his breakfast, and takes him to a secluded place on a small knoll south of her house. It is still dark when they walk to the selected place of prayer. Sanapia sits facing east with her patient beside her. She

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775 then unwraps her medicines and exposes them on the cloth in which they were
755 wrapped.
756 Both Sanapia and her patient smoke Bull Durham tobacco wrapped in corn
782 shucks as they wait for the sun to rise. Sanapia prays to the earth immediately
[276] before sunrise, and when the sun appears, she directs her prayers to it.

> In the morning, before the sun come up, you go out away from the house, where nobody can hear you and you pray. You touch the ground with your hands, four times, and say . . . I don't know where it came from, but you say, "Mother earth, I want you to take my words. I want you to do what I want. I'm walking over you. I live on you, and I love you because you're my land." Say things like that to it. That sun not up yet. But it's the big eagle . . . talk to it like it's eagle . . . think of it like that, you know. It's going to fly up pretty soon when the sun comes up, and that's the eagle going to do everything I want.

776 The sun and the earth were the two greatest sources of power in the
821 nomadic Comanche culture. Wallace and Hoebel (1952:190) write that ". . . only
823 the sun, moon, and earth were looked upon as semi-dieties." They were also personified and addressed in prayer. The earth was considered second only to the sun in supernatural importance by the Comanches; however, though they were active in the affairs of men, neither the sun nor the earth gave personal power (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:195–197). Also in the content of the pages just cited are numerous mentions of the earth being addressed as "mother" by the Comanches. Kardiner (1945:63), when discussing Comanche beliefs associated with magic and power, writes: "The greatest powers were the earth, and the sun, with which the eagle was felt to be associated."

775 When the sun appears over the horizon, Sanapia begins her prayers in
755 which she will ask "the eagle" to aid her in healing her patient. The patient,
756 seated beside her, is instructed to pray for his recovery and to put his faith and
782 trust in the powers of the earth and sun. She also indicates her medicines, exposed to the sun, and asks that it will fill them with power.

This period of prayer, first to the earth and then to the rising sun, lasts
[372] about half an hour, or until the sun has completely cleared the horizon. Sanapia then takes her patient back to her house, where her hubsnd or son have already prepared the pecan wood coals which Sanapia will need when she begins to doctor.
[824] Pecan coals are desired because they form long-burning, even coals. At this time
237 she will attach her crow feather amulet to a beam on her front porch. She some-
[778] times affixes several crow feathers to her patient's wrist.

As mentioned previously, in doctoring, Sanapia is alone with her patient.
775 If she is in a tent or tepee, she sits on the south side of the tent, which is custom-
755 arily facing east, and positions her patient directly in front of her. He lies on his
756 back with his head toward the west. The medicines she will use are placed to
[823] her right, and the pecan coals are placed in an iron kettle or shovel so their position can be changed as Sanapia doctors. When she is in a house, she attempts to duplicate these conditions as closely as possible.

After her patient is situated, Sanapia begins her attempt to mobilize her

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various power sources for the task at hand. She deposits some cedar on the coals and smokes her Medicine feather by lightly waving it through the rising smoke four times. She then lays her feather on the fragment of Mexican sarape, which also underlies the medicines she will use, and holds her hands in the medicine smoke. With a washing motion, she draws the smoke over her face, arms, chest, and legs. After she "cleanses" herself with the smoke, she takes her feather and ceremonially fans her patient. 775 755 756

She then takes her Bible between her palms and, extending her arms before her, she prays to "God and Jesus and especially the Holy Ghost" to assist her in healing her patient. If she is inspired to do so, she will sometimes open her Bible at random and read from it in an attempt to receive a sign from "God, Jesus, or the Holy Ghost" concerning the direction she should take in her doctoring, or the possible outcome of her treatment. 775 755 756 779 782

Next, Sanapia picks up her Chief Peyote, and holding it in her right hand, she speaks to it. As mentioned in the chapter on medicines, Sanapia will usually threaten the peyote rather than beseech it or pray to it when she uses it in dotcoring. As she talks to it, she will transfer it from hand to hand in order to draw the power it possesses into her hands. 775 755 756 278

After Sanapia has made her opening prayers, she is in a very agitated emotional condition. This is mentioned both by Sanapia and by some of her expatients. She considers the chills, shaking, and trembling that she experiences as signs that her power has entered her, and she will not begin to doctor until she reaches this state. 775 755 756 152

> And when I pray like that . . . well, that power just come over me, comes down and gives me that chills and I start shaking all at once and pretty soon it goes away and then I start. Sometimes I can't hardly touch them, the way my hand be shaking. It makes me feel like that power wants to make me get them well right now.

When she has regained control of her hands after the siege of trembling, Sanapia begins the treatment proper. She takes a segment of the white root of *bekwinatsu* and masticates it to a moist pulp. She then spews it over the patient's face, head, and arms if they have been affected by the ghost contagion. She also takes this moist pulp, and, after rolling it between her palms, she rubs it over the areas of the patient's body which exhibit symptoms of ghost sickness. After so doing, she deposits this premasticated root in the patient's mouth and instructs him to to swallow it. 775 755 756

Sanapia then chews another piece of *bekwinatsu* together with a few leaves of sweet sage to sweeten her mouth and, retaining this concoction in her mouth, applies her mouth to the contorted areas of the patient's face to suck out the sickness. Although she has the option of utilizing her sucking horn in other cases, she is obliged to use her mouth in the doctoring of ghost sickness.

Her mouth and hands are the areas of her body which are believed to be especially charged with power. This is the rationale for the spewing of medicines on a patient, the administering of medicines which have been premasticated by

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775 Sanapia, Sanapia's handling of the medicines before she applies them to her
755 patient, and the need of the direct application of the doctor's mouth in the
756 treatment of ghost sickness, the most tenacious sickness Sanapia encounters.

When Sanapia turns her attention to the patient's twisted hands, a contortion which occurs in most cases of ghost sickness reported by Sanapia, her behavior and "bedside manner" undergo a radical change—from intensity and outwardly appearing agitation to gentleness and calm. She puts cedar and rock medicine on the coals to produce medicine smoke and then, manipulating the patient's hand, holds it over the rising smoke. During this phase of treatment she croons and sings to the patient and assures him that her powers will enable him to recover. She will also, at times, drape a black kerchief or a towel on the patient's face as she fans the medicine smoke over his face. After the smoking of the hand, she smooths it with her Medicine feather while her crooning tone is continued.

When her treatment of any afflicted extremity is completed, Sanapia once again places cedar and rock medicine on the coals and fans the medicine smoke over the patient. She then smokes the Medicine feather and draws the smoke over herself with a washing motion of her hands. At this point the first treatment is terminated.

The patient is instructed to rest after this first treatment. Sanapia rewraps her medicines before leaving the room in which she has been doctoring. She then immediately washes her hands and rinses her mouth with a commercial brand of mouth wash in order to destroy any "poison" which she feels may be in her mouth.

Between treatments the patient is continually dosed with a decoction of
[262] *bakwinatsu*. There are no dietary restrictions placed on him during his two-day treatment. Sanapia instructs her patient to rest, pray, and think only pleasant thoughts between treatments. During the midmorning and midafternoon when Sanapia is not involved in doctoring, she busies herself with her household chores and observes no special type of behavior connected with her doctoring. She does insist on decorum and a general quiet among household members during the several days of treatment for the sake of her patient.

When the sun reaches its zenith at midday, the second treatment is begun. This treatment will be similar to the morning treatment. By the end of the second treatment Sanapia will be able to determine if the patient is responding favorably. If the prognosis is good at this point, the subsequent treatments will all be similiar to the first one. However, if the patient is showing no sign of improvement or is worsening, Sanapia will begin to add more elements to her basic pattern of treatment. She will also be more susceptible to inspired variations since she believes that when her powers are with her to their fullest potential, any thoughts she has are of the order of a supernatural directive.

## Use of the Peyote Meeting

775 If she feels that a crisis is developing with respect to her patient's condi-
755 tion, she will take her first step to augment the intensity of treatment during the
756
774

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third treatment at sunset on the first day. Sanapia will usually organize a specialized peyote meeting at this juncture. She carefully selects those to be invited, choosing only three or four individuals who she believes are especially good people and who have prayed with her in the past in similar situations. The local peyote leader is always included in this group since Sanapia concedes that it is his right to lead the meeting, though it is understood that it will be led for her purposes.

This meeting is held indoors. The fire is laid on a piece of sheet metal supported on several bricks. Most of the standard elements of a Comanche peyote meeting are present in this meeting—water drum, gourd rattles, sage wand, cedar staff, Chief Peyote, feather fans, eagle feathers, and Bull Durham tobacco and corn shucks for ceremonial smoking. The tepee is obviously lacking, as is the crescent-shaped earthen altar, the leader's whistle, the water ceremonies, and the ceremonial breakfast.

The meeting proceeds in the usual manner. Sanapia doctors throughout the meeting at those times when she feels particularly inspired to do so. When she desires to doctor, the leader signals those present to cease the singing and passing of the drum and accompanying paraphernalia. Sanapia then waits for the fire to die down to coals before she begins to doctor. She bases her treatment during the meeting on the basic pattern which she followed in the first two treatments earlier that day. However, at this time she adds the use of peyote to her doctoring.

After the smoking of her Medicine feather and herself, the fanning and smoking of her patient and all those present, and the applying of *bekwinatsu* she gives the patient four peyote buttons which she first has masticated. After the patient has taken the required first four buttons, he is doctored with a decoction of peyote. This "tea" is drunk by the patient, and it is applied externally by Sanapia as well as being spewed over the patient's face, head, and hands.

At sunrise when the meeting ends and the peyote drum is disassembled, Sanapia sometimes requests the moist drumhead from the leader and utilizes it in doctoring her patient. She presses the wet hide over the top of the patient's head and forms the hide to the contours of the patient's face while she prays that the patient's face will be cured when she takes the hide off. There is the notion that the pliable qualities of the wet hide will be transferred to the patient's face, and as Sanapia forms the hide, so might she reform the patient's contorted countenance.

She takes some of the sweet sage used to support the Chief Peyote used during the meeting, and after chewing it and rolling it between her hands, she rubs it over the afflicted areas of the patient's body. Sanapia takes a mouthful of water from the peyote drum and blows it over her patient. Some of the charcoal from the drum is used by Sanapia to draw a series of concentric circles on the contorted area of the patient's face. This magical act is supposed to constrict the "foamy stuff" which is causing the contortions of the face by first drawing it within the outer circle, then within the next smaller circle, and so on until the sickness is so localized that it will be a simple task for Sanapia to suck it out.

The seven stone "bosses" which are employed to attach the drum head to the kettle drum body are also utilized by Sanapia as medicine. Sanapia takes

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several in each hand and taps the patient's face. This is felt to transfer the positive qualities of these stones—firmness and stability—to the patient's face.

## Intercession of the Medicine Eagle

If the patient is still not improved after the peyote meeting, Sanapia will move to her ultimate level of doctoring intensity by attempting to call her Medicine eagle to her assistance through the intercession of the spirits of her mother and maternal uncle. This step is not taken at the beginning of treatment because of the dangers involved with the presence of so great an amount of supernatural power. It is possible that she might kill her patient by exposing him to this burst of supernatural energy. Also, Sanapia forestalls calling her ultimate powers into play because of her feeling that the physical reactions which this powerful presence produces in her will ultimately cause her death.

On the second day, if she has decided to follow this course of action, she refrains from her sunrise and midday doctoring. The patient spends the day resting and drinking great quantities of peyote and *bekwinatsu* "tea." Sanapia passes the daylight hours alone in some secluded area preparing herself for the traumatic activities in which she will be engaged after sunset.

> I set somewhere out there away from peoples . . . be by myself. I don't do nothing but sit and think about things. Like what my mother told me about things, and what my uncle told me. Think about all the years I come along and how up to today I'm still living. I don't do anything different from what I do if I am sitting anywhere by myself . . . just thinking about them things.

Immediately before sunset Sanapia goes to the stream which flows near her house and washes her hands and face before returning to her house. Any small children or infants who happen to be members of the household at this time are taken to spend the night with relatives in a nearby town, so they need not be exposed to the potential dangers of the night's doctoring activities. Sanapia firmly instructs her patient that he must do whatever she requests of him during the coming night. If he reacts slowly to her commands, he could die. Once again, this instruction is given in recognition of the dangers of supernatural power.

The night's doctoring follows the basic pattern of the first two treatments of the first day; however, this last treatment of the second day will continue throughout the night and will contain the crucial element of Sanapia's singing of her Medicine song. Sometime late in the night when Sanapia feels the proper inspiration, she begins to sing her song. She will sing it over and over again until the spirits she is calling come to her. The first singing of the song takes place with her patient as she fans him with her Medicine feather. She then leaves the house and continues her singing as she sits alone in the dark.

Sanapia first sees the spirits of her mother and uncle as two lights burning on the crest of a hill approximately a hundred yards south of her house. They slowly approach her. The rapidity of their approach corresponds to the intensity of Sanapia's singing, for it is her song which is drawing them to her. They

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finally stand before her, looking entirely natural and lifelike, much as they looked during Sanapia's adolescence. Sanapia continues her singing as they stand silently before her. In her song she tells them that she is alone and helpless and that she has no one to whom she can turn for help but them. She reminds them of their pledge of aid whenever she might need it during her lifetime. Sanapia may have to repeat her song for several hours as the spirits stand gazing down at her. Finally, with gestures of the hands they indicate that Sanapia will have what she wishes.

This means that the spirits of her mother and uncle have interceded with the Medicine eagle on her behalf. If the Medicine eagle is going to appear to Sanapia, it is at this time that he makes his appearance. Sanapia does not move after the spirits of her mother and uncle have left her. She ceases her Medicine song, but she remains to pray for a while longer before returning to her patient. Sanapia also must rest while her heart and breathing recover normalcy after the agitation they experienced during the apparition of the spirits.

She describes the appearance of the Medicine eagle in the following account:

> I was so tired then and I was crying too. Sitting there and seeing my mother like that. All at once I felt cold wind pushing me down. It was on my head and all around . . . flatten down the grass around me and I had to lean on my hands because it was heavy like I thought it might push me down right over my face. My blanket was blowing off me and I was grabbing for it . . . blowing my hair all over. Got scared and started shaking. Boy! that wind blow dust in my eyes and I was rubbing them when all at once everything got calm . . . like a dream like when you be sleeping way in the night. I saw that eagle . . . big, big, like an eagle . . . shining so pretty on its feathers. And I guess I was being silly because I start crying some more . . . just like some old woman. But I hear it in my mind, you know, say, "Go ahead, get him well. You can do it." Then I don't see nothing . . . I guess it's gone then.

Sanapia returns to her patient and attempts to utilize her newly acquired power increase to cure him. She uses only her Medicine feather and medicine smoke at this point. Most of her energy is aimed at instilling in her patient, through her prayers and contact with her feather, enough power to negate the malevolent forces which are acting to keep the patient from recovering. She does not come in physical contact with the patient at this time, for she feels that such contact would kill him.

If her patient has recovered during the night, she takes him outside with her before sunrise to make her morning prayers. She then blesses him in the standard manner and instructs him to wear the red paint for two days before he washes it off. This blessing on the morning of the third day after the initiation of doctoring marks the end of treatment.

## Payments

The final payment is made within the succeeding weeks. Sanapia does not state a price but must accept whatever is offered her. She has received from

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775 $25 to $100 for her services as a doctor. The normal payment consists of about
756 $30, plus groceries and enough cloth for several dresses. Several informants stated
465 that the gift of groceries is connected with a belief that Sanapia eats the sickness
261 which a patient might have; therefore, she should be given something good to eat as payment.

Sanapia's many comments concerning the difficulty of being a doctor often deal with the question of payments.

> Some people don't pay. They have to but they don't. They say, "Well, we haven't got no money now, but when we got money we'll pay you." They don't do it. My husband got to talking about it with some people that came here once. I was in there listening. He said, "Lots of people come here, and they come in real sick, real sick. She takes her time and doctor them, and she wait on them, and she even cook for them and give them eats because its two or three days before she get through with them. They promise her this and that and they never give it to her." There's many people that owe me that. I get tired, you know. Lots of times it get so hot in there doctoring them . . . sweating and tired out by the time I get through. And then I go through all that work for nothing.

## The Necessity of Faith

755 An emergency situation sometimes arises when Sanapia must leave her
756 house and go to the patient to doctor him. In this instance all of the formal first interview rituals are ignored, and Sanapia may begin doctoring with an intensity greater than that which she would be prone to initiate in an ordinary case. Sanapia customarily makes the following statement to those who appear at her home and hurriedly insist that she come at once to doctor a sick relative: "If I catch you between here and you alls place, they ain't no use in me doctoring." In other words, if Sanapia, leaving after the petitioners, overtakes them before they reach home where the sick individual lies, it signifies to Sanapia that the petitioners either do not care very much for the sick individual since they did not hurry back to him or they do not believe in Sanapia's powers. Sanapia's customarily made statement in this situation is involved with her feeling of the necessity of men's faith in power if they desire supernatural power to operate on their behalf.

Throughout the doctoring procedure, Sanapia continually prods the patient to have faith in her powers and the powers of the sun, earth, God, peyote, Jesus, Medicine eagle, and the Holy Ghost. It can also be remembered that many of the rituals involved with Sanapia's acquisition of power from her mother were colored by tests of faith and courage. Sanapia will admit that a person who does not believe in her power cannot be doctored by her: Her doctoring will have no
775 effect. Also, a person who does not believe in ghosts and witches cannot be harmed
754 by them. Wallace and Hoebel (1952:159) mention that the Comanches felt that if a *puhakut* did not believe in the powers he possessed, his powers would not work for him.

In order to instill this crucial element of faith in her patient, Sanapia admits that she does exaggerate her doctoring performance at times. She did not

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elaborate on this statement, only suggesting that she works to make her patient believe in her since he will not regain his health if he does not have faith in her powers. Some of Sanapia's expatients have noted her ability to make things appear and disappear; however, as mentioned previously, Sanapia will deny that she does sleight of hand.

Sanapia is aware that her shamanistic performance is expected by her patients and that it is a necessary element in strengthening their faith in her. However, she states that she could marshal her powers for healing without the performance, though the patient would not be highly impressed. Sanapia must move the patient to an emotional acceptance of her powers, for she feels that without the patient's confirmed faith her powers can do nothing toward curing him. Sanapia's belief that the patient's attitude toward the doctor is of significant importance in determining the outcome of the treatment is based in a sound grasp of psychotherapeutic principle, though in her case it is couched in the mystique of the faith healer.

## Number of Patients per Year

How many patients does Sanapia doctor each year? This would be a difficult question to answer exactly. Sanapia does not think in these terms. Further she does not consider it "proper" to discuss the question. I would estimate, however, that she doctors approximately six cases of ghost sickness per year, and she may treat twenty patients suffering from more standard ailments during the same time. These estimates are based on clues collected during several years of interviewing and on observations of the contents of her medicine kit. I observed her medicine kit in the early fall when her medicines were almost totally depleted and watched as she collected what she felt would be a sufficient quantity of medicines to last until the next collecting season the following fall. From a knowledge of the possible combinations and quantities of dosages of these medicines, I estimated how many patients could be treated before the medicine supply would be depleted. This estimate corresponded closely with the estimates based on interview material.

## What Is Ghost Sickness?

This is an important question. The key to understanding Sanapia's vital function in twentieth-century Comanche society rests with the answer. Ghost sickness may be an entirely organic or static affliction, perhaps a variety of organically motivated transient paralysis. Then again, a viewpoint suggesting the psychogenic nature of ghost sickness presented itself when Sanapia's accounts of ghost sickness victims were perused, particularly noting the age and sex of the victim. In the majority of cases, the victim was male, twenty-five to forty years of age. Also, based on interviews with ghost-sickness victims and information gathered from Comanche informants, it was discovered that these individuals were all very similar personalities.

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775 164 [755] The Comanches use "crooked mouth," "twisted face," and "twisted up" as synonyms for ghost sickness, and these terms are helpful in their descriptive capacity. It is also significant that Sanapia is almost always successful in curing this affliction in adults, though she is much less efficient in curing these same symptoms when they appear in infants and are considered the result of witchcraft.

A survey of the literature on hemiplegic disorders strongly suggests for consideration a vaguely understood variety of paralysis called Bell's palsy. Bell's palsy is due to the paralysis of the seventh cranial nerve and results in the paralysis of one-half the face. The condition is usually abrupt in onset, reaching its peak within a few hours. In the majority of cases the paralysis appears as an isolated finding without demonstrable cause. The eye on the affected side cannot be closed and its waters excessively. The lips are displaced toward the healthy side and the corner of the mouth sags. "No proof of bacterial or viral infection has yet been adduced, and the actual pathogenesis remains unknown" (Kunkle 1950:1493). Treatment usually consists of kneading and friction on the afflicted side (Goodall-Copestake 1926:225).

124 775 164 I prepared simplified descriptions of ordinary hemiplegia, multiple or disseminated sclerosis, shaking palsy or Parkinson's disease, and Bell's palsy, neuromuscular disorders which all share some symptoms in common, and read them to Sanapia for her reaction. She immediately chose the account of Bell's palsy as a description of ghost sickness, even suggesting that I had based the description on information with which she had supplied me.

775 164 The medical descriptions of Bell's palsy describe the facial paralysis present in ghost sickness; however, in these accounts no mention is made of a concomitantly occurring contraction, spasm, or paralysis of the hands and arms, a symptom which from Sanapia's accounts occurs in many cases of ghost sickness. The emotion of fear, a key theme in the accounts of actual ghost contagion, offers a clue to the etiology of the affliction of the hands and arms. Dr. Gail Neely (1968) offered the suggestion that fear or emotional shock is one of the major causes of hyperventilation, or highly irregular, abnormally rapid respiration. Schottstaedt (1960: 48–51) supports Neely's suggestion and adds:

> Hyperventilation deserves special emphasis because of its importance in giving rise to symptoms. . . . This process ultimately results in a state of respiratory alkalosis with effects throughout the body. Many sensations result from this chemical derangement. . . . If hyperventilation continues long enough, spasms of the hand and feet (tetany), a feeling of being paralyzed, and actual loss of consciousness may occur. . . . Any of these manifestations may arouse fear; the more dramatic ones ordinarily do.
>
> In addition, an anxious person often has irregular respiration, which may become sufficiently severe to produce all of the manifestations of hyperventilation. The overt behavior is usually avoidance, ranging from a readiness or desire for flight to actual running away.

Medical descriptions of tetany, which, as Schottstaedt mentioned, can be caused by hyperventilation, follow Sanapia's description of the hands in ghost sickness to the letter. Aub (1951:1275) writes:

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The hands become stiff, with rigid fingers. The thumb is markedly adducted and partially covered by the stiff fingers, which are usually bent only at their metacarpophalangeal joints. The palm of the hand is hollowed, while the wrist and elbow are flexed.

It is significant that Sanapia's methods of doctoring ghost sickness follow the treatment by white doctors for Bell's palsy and hyperventilation. Her rationale for her method of treatment is not similar, but the actual results of the behavior which she initiates are. She applies her mouth to the patient's face in an attempt to suck the illness from the individual. She also applies liquid medicines to the face area and draws her Medicine feather over the skin in the afflicted area. This could constitute the "gentle massage," "kneading of the cheek muscles," and "gentle friction" prescribed by Kunkel (1950:1493–1494) and Goodall-Copestake (1926:225) for treatment of Bell's palsy. When Sanapia turns her attention to treating the contorted hands, her method, in general, follows that which Dr. Neely states that he utilizes to relieve the symptoms of hyperventilation. She drapes a towel or piece of cloth over the patient's face and directs him to inhale the pungent smoke produced by smoldering medicines. During this phase of treatment she croons to the patient and gently reassures him that his condition will be cured. Neely stresses that the calm reassurance of the patient suffering from hyperventilation was a necessary part of the treatment. He also temporarily places a bag or some sort of facial covering over the patient's mouth and nose to impede the invidiual's intake of oxygen and force the recirculation of carbon dioxide. He also notes that smelling salts or ammonia can be used to further decrease the patient's attempts at excessively deep and rapid breathing.

## A Psychogenic Hypothesis

In an attempt to discover an organic or static description of ghost sickness it was found that the types of disorders which most thoroughly describe ghost sickness are all highly suspect as to their being more organic than more functional in nature. The particular reasons why this hypothesis was suggested prior to the discussion of Bell's palsy and hyperventilation were based on the noted similarity in age, sex, and general personality type of the ghost victims and the fact that though the rules for ghost avoidance are extremely simple and obvious, certain individuals still apparently voluntarily violate these rules with full knowledge of the predicted consequences. The discussion of Bell's palsy and hyperventilation added further evidence for the role of psychological phenomenon, for example, the emotion of fear, desire for avoidance, shock, emotional strain, pressure, and the therapeutic value of reassurance in the treatment of hyperventilation.

Two concepts of psychosomatic medicine must be mentioned and their utility evaluated before proceeding further. These concepts are "conversion reaction" and "vegetative neurosis." A conversion symptom is a symbolic expression of a well-defined emotional content, while a vegetative neurosis is the physiological

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accompaniment of constant, periodically recurring emotional states rather than an expression of an emotional state (Alexander 1948:7).

Heuristically, the concept of vegetative neurosis is disappointing for our purposes. It leads us nowhere, for it contains no aids to determine the meaning of expression, the expressive "why" of ghost sickness, for example. A conversion reaction (synonym: conversion hysteria), however, is a symbolic expression of a specific emotional state. It is essentially an unusual form of communication. A mode of symbolic communication, to function, must possess meaning for the group, that is, the relationship of the symbol to the referent must be accepted by group consensus. Thus, if it can be established that ghost sickness is a conversion reaction in Comanche society, the suggestion can be made that it acts as a form of communication. If we can identify the referents to the symbology being employed in this communication, we can perhaps decipher the message and determine the psychogenic roots of ghost sickness.

A person with conversion hysteria substitutes a symptom for a psychological conflict. "For example, a girl of eighteen goes blind in an examination, thinking, 'I don't see how I can pass this,' and four years later goes blind again when her bridegroom is ordered overseas." (Cobb 1950:1514). Physiologically, conversion is no different from any normal method of expressing emotion, such as weeping, laughing, and blushing. Hysterical conversion, however, is motivated by unconscious impulses. Motor paralysis is the most common symptom in such instances. It is also noteworthy that conversion symptoms often imitate organic illness, that is, they represent the patient's notion of disease process.

Thus, it can be seen that the physiological nature of ghost sickness, paralysis of voluntary muscles, can be considered as at least similar to the general complexion of the major manifestations of conversion reactions. However, the nature of the precipitating factors involved remains a problem. What is the content of the "psychological conflict, unconscious alien impulse, or unbearable idea" (West 1962:94) which could cause a conversion reaction in a Comanche individual resulting in ghost sickness.

## The Victim of the Ghost

In my study of the Comanche ghost-sickness victim, I noticed that a definite attempt at emulative adaptation to white society which failed, the unendurable psychological state of cultural marginality, and an extremely intense desire for reintegration with the more traditionally oriented group were the three most prevalent themes preceding the onslaught of ghost sickness. The victim usually sprang from the traditional group; therefore he desired reintegration with that particular group. Also, though the victim may have initially naively desired to interact in only one institution of white society, usually the economic system, his traditional group automatically defines him totally out of their category. Absolute outcasting from the traditional group is not what really happens in every case; however, it seems to be what the ghost-sickness victim thinks happened. The ghost-sickness victim will feel extremely anxious under the conditions outlined. He

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does not consciously accept that he has done anything to deserve the negative treatment which he feels he is receiving from both white and Indian society. Anger toward white society and guilt feelings, perhaps based on his rejection of the Indian way, might arise in him. He has been judged inadequate by both the white and the Indian worlds. He belongs nowhere. An individual in this situation must act.

The next problem he must face is the method by which reintegration with the native group can be accomplished. For this type of individual it is not easy, for he desires to become totally like the group which he once rejected. He must dramatically convince himself as well as his traditional group that he is an Indian, that he belongs. Simply returning to the family locale and indulging in self-conscious identification with ceremonial forms, for example, is not enough. He must have no doubts about his adequacy as an Indian. He can no longer tolerate ambivalency, and he must be as acceptable to himself as he is to his parent group.

## Indian-ness and Ghost Sickness

In contemporary Comanche society there is only one trait which is unequivocally and exclusively Indian—the ability to contract ghost sickness. "Blood" means nothing because of the great degree of intermarriage with other tribes and the Comanche's long-standing custom of incorporating white and Mexican captives into the family structure. Non-Indians can take part in Peyotism, dance in ceremonial dancing societies, and speak the Comanche language. A non-Indian, however, cannot incur ghost sickness. Therefore, to Comanches, someone who contracts ghost sickness must be a "real Indian."

## The Efficiency of Ghost Sickness

Ghost sickness possesses several other characteristics which make it a very efficient disorder for the potential victim. It is socially visible; the ghost-sickness victim can wear the badge of his true Indian-ness on his face. It can only be cured by a native doctor. In this way the victim, by becoming the patient of the native doctor, states his faith in an extremely ancient Comanche institution. Because this doctor will no doubt cure him, the victim's faith is substantiated. Further, the Comanche community comes to the aid, succor, and support of the victim of the ghost—the common enemy. Associated with this fact is the function of the physical ugliness which the ghost victim possesses. By being so "pitiable," he can direct the course of his reintegration to a great degree through the Comanche institutionalized patterns of generosity and kindness to individuals who are in a pitiable condition. In this physical condition he can make personal demands which he could not make and expect to be carried out if he were not so afflicted. Also, since ghost-sickness symptoms are admirably suited to the requirements of conversion reactions, the affliction is manifestly ideal for the particular nature of the intolerable emotional state possessed by the potential ghost victim.

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## Precipitating Factors

186 775 154 156 The precipitating factors to ghost sickness need not be as externally dramatic as those thus far presented. The drama and the trauma of these factors dwell within the psychological makeup of the particular individual involved. The contraction of ghost sickness can function as a psychic reminder to a Comanche that he is a Comanche. It can serve to reaffirm his ethnic identity. It may be a self-inflicted punishment by a native-oriented Comanche who begins to doubt his traditional culture. Ghost sickness has also served to dramatically solve generational tensions. A young person contracts ghost sickness to signal acquiescence to the parent generation's demands. However, all these factors are ultimately related to the disruptive influences of acculturation with the dominant white society.

186 775 154 156 184 177 The recently developed Comanche ghost complex appears to be a means by which certain Comanche individuals can circumvent the psychological impasses which have appeared as a result of the twentieth-century Comanche life situation. It is particularly beneficial for the traditional group for several reasons. If a Comanche individual chooses this means of relief, he is committed to return to the traditionalist fold. The ghost complex might be viewed as a selective net which the traditional group has thrown around itself. Those Comanches who are drawn into the conditions which lead to the emotional states in which they would unconsciously choose ghost sickness as an "out" are usually relatively sensitive and intelligent individuals and therefore valuable as group members. They would have to fully and traumatically feel their intolerable cultural and psychological position prior to ghost sickness. Those Comanches who approach these same conditions and who fail to react to them, or acculturate, or turn to such relief as alcoholism, would not be very valuable social components to the traditional group in any case. This "net" operates to more effectively retain the big fish, while it lets the little fish run.

186 775 154 156 184 177 562 The fact that men are afflicted by ghost sickness more often than women could be explained by several factors, particularly, the greater degree of independence ideally expected of men, coupled with the real economic dependence of men; in many cases, dependence on women. Women are more effectively controlled by the primary group, while Comanche men are expected to "act like men" in the face of economic difficulties and a white society which does not recognize them as men.

## Change in Behavior

186 775 154 156 184 177 The behavior change exhibited by ghost-sickness victims from prior to the onset of ghost sickness until the termination of the cure corresponds with one of the desires which stimulated the victim to ghost sickness in the first place—total identification with the traditional group. They become model traditional-oriented group members, while, prior to ghost sickness, they behaved in a manner considered erratic, bizarre, or "crazy" by these Comanches.

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## Ghost Sickness and Witch Sickness

Sanapia's great success in curing ghost-sickness victims appears to give further support to the idea of the psychogenesis of ghost sickness. Then again, she would also be attributed with success in curing a transient unilateral facial paralysis of an organic genesis which ran its course during the time of treatment or within a suitable time span after treatment. Of course, they both support the same conclusion to the Comanches: Sanapia can cure ghost sickness. However, if Sanapia is successful in curing ghost sickness, why does she enjoy a relative lack of success in curing the victims of witchcraft when the symptomatic manifestations of the two are practically identical? Once again, as in the discussion of ghost sickness, a valuable clue is suggested by looking at standardization in the age and sex of the victims of the witch. The institution of witchcraft will be more thoroughly surveyed in Chapter 5. It seems most appropriate that the etiology of witchcraft symptoms should be discussed at this juncture since we are approaching the question of Sanapia's cultural function as curer of afflictions believed by the Comanches to be magically or supernaturally instigated.

The overwhelming majority of Comanche witch victims are infants, rarely more than several years of age. Therefore, we must base our attempt at explanation of the symptoms of witch sickness on an organic disorder which corresponds to the symptoms displayed by the witched victim. The medical literature presents an account of a disorder which corresponds in type to the symptoms present in ghost sickness and witch sickness, but which is limited, with rare exceptions, to infants less than two years of age. This neuromuscular disorder, tetany, also exhibits two symptoms by which Sanapia conceptually differentiates between witch sickness and ghost sickness by the degree of their severity. Sanapia points out that though witch- and ghost-sickness victims demonstrate similar modes of contortion, the witch victim's contortions appear most often in spasmodic fashion, while this trait is less marked in ghost sickness. Also, the peculiar contractions of the hands and arms, described in discussing ghost sickness, are more prevalent in cases of witch sickness. Further, two major causes of tetany in infants result from inadequate calcium intake and vitamin D deficiency, dietary lacks which could easily occur in the relatively poor environment in which many Comanche infants are reared.

Aub (1951:1275) mentions that signs of tetany will result from alkalosis of various origins, such as hyperventilation. The relationship of the emotion of fear to hyperventilation is noteworthy. Although the infant does not understand that he is the target of the witch, his parents do. Perhaps the parents' increased anxiety over the symptoms of tetany, which they could associate with witchcraft, only acts to increase anxiety in the infant, thus more readily acting to increase the possibility of hyperventilation. It is a common observation that the emotional state of parents can affect the emotional state of their infant children.

Because of the suggested differences in etiology of ghost sickness and witch sickness, Sanapia's success with ghost sickness and relative lack of success in curing witch sickness is understandable. She can relieve some of the symptoms of

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754 witch sickness through her ability to ease the anxiety of the parents and therefore
854 decrease the anxiety which is communicated to the child. However, Sanapia can-
164 not alleviate certain factors, perhaps of an environmental nature, which have
756 caused tetany. It is also significant that with witch victims, because of their age, Sanapia is unable to communicate. In discussing the actual treatment of ghost sickness, it was seen that psychotherapeutic traits in her behavior toward her patient are ubiquitous.

## Sanapia, Ghosts, and Ghost Sickness

756 A great amount of time has been spent in discussing ghosts, ghost sick-
775 ness, and the suggested causes of ghost sickness because of this complex's close
164 association to Sanapia's role in Comanche society. As an eagle doctor, Sanapia's
755 special thaumaturgic power is believed to be her ability to counteract or defeat the ghost's malevolent influences on living men. Because of the nature of the symptoms associated with ghost sickness and because of their probable psychogenic etiology, she is almost always successful in treating the victim of the ghost. If the affliction which her patient possesses is an organically based transient unilateral facial paralysis, it will disappear of its own accord when it runs its course; and if the disorder is hysterically induced, the patient actually cures himself, while Sanapia more or less functions as a symbol to the patient that the time for his cure is at hand. Of course, the psychotherapeutic value of her method of curing cannot be minimized, and perhaps it could be said that the emotional state which she induces in her hysterical patient functions as a trigger for his self-healing.

756 Sanapia's most important overt function in contemporary Comanche society
775 is as a symbol of the Comanche's ability to withstand the attacks of the ghosts.
154 She also serves as the necessary key to the psychological reintegration of marginal Comanches who have "employed" the ghost-sickness conversion reaction. As long as Sanapia, or other eagle doctors, stand as a source of cure, Comanche individuals can contract ghost sickness as a means of relieving certain intolerable emotional states. This could also serve to explain the longevity of the institution of the Comanche eagle doctor, while the other kinds of Comanche native doctors have
756 long since ceased to exist. The human disorder associated with the eagle doctor's
177 particular brand of specialization, ghost sickness, has only increased with the
775 acculturation of the Comanche people, while the specialties of the other varieties
164 of Comanche doctors have been usurped during this same process. It is ironic that acculturation, while actively corroding the overall complexion of traditional Comanche culture, has also served to revive and augment the important function of a symbol of traditional Comanche culture, the Medicine woman.

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the imitative and sympathetic mystical rapport an eagle doctor possess with his supernatural patron, the eagle; and it suggests that possibly this method of witchcraft is, or was, in the form of a special Medicine solely possessed by doctors with eagle power and that doctors who possessed a different supernatural patron would also possess different method of witchcraft. The emphasis on prayers to the sun is also relevant.

## The Symptoms of Witch Sickness

Sanapia feels that the symptoms exhibited by an individual who has been witched are unmistakable. Such a person feels tired and listless and is unable to retain food. He wants to sleep continually and usually suffers from fever. The unique symptom of witchcraft, according to Sanapia, is excessive perspiration on the top of the victim's head, perspiration which the victim cannot feel and which can be felt only by a doctor possessing the proper Medicine. She believes that this localized fever is caused by "foamy stuff" which accumulates under the skin surface at the top of the head. The foamy stuff is, in turn, caused by the magically toxic witch's feather. Also occurring are symptoms which are very similar to the unilateral facial paralysis which appears with ghost sickness. In the case of witchcraft, however, the victim's eyes do not water, he does not salivate excessively, and the contortions of the face, hands, and arms occur in spasmodic fashion rather than the constant state of paralysis found with ghost sickness. In both cases the contortions of the face are felt to be caused by pockets of foamy stuff which accumulate under the skin.

Sanapia feels that ghost and witch sickness are the most difficult types of sickness to treat because both are essentially unnatural and malevolent. In contrast, pneumonia, for example, is a natural sickness which does not possess the supernatural tenacity of illnesses which are backed by the supernatural and malevolent resolve of a ghost or witch. Thus with ghost and witch sickness, Sanapia must not only cure the symptomatic effects of these illnesses but must also act to neutralize the malevolent supernatural power which is somehow contiguous with these symptoms.

## Treatment of Witch Sickness

When Sanapia doctors a victim of witchcraft, she utilizes *təpinatsu*, *ekapokowa:pi*, *kusiwəna*, her Medicine feather, glass slivers, charcoal from the peyote drum, and her sucking horn. She prepares a thin paste of *kusiwəna* and applies it to the area of the patient's body which she feels to be the place where the feather is located. *Təpinatsu* and *ekapokowa:pi* are deposited on live coals to produce medicine smoke which is wafted over the patient to induce healing.

The procedure begins before sunrise on the first day of treatment when Sanapia makes her morning prayers to the rising sun. She begins treatment proper when she feels all conditions to be favorable. Exactly what criteria Sanapia uses

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## Concepts of Illness

Sanapia employs three basic notions as foundations in her conceptualization 753
of the nature of illness. The first of these may be stated: Things in rapid and erractic motion or rapid and erratic motion itself are intrinsically dangerous to the human body. It is pertinent that Kardiner (1945:66) mentions that the Comanches thought of diseases not as material objects but as kinds of insects, living things, which had somehow gotten into the body.

The second of these basic ideas is that virtually all human physiological malfunction is caused by the swelling of certain body tissues, liquids, or specific organs; and the third of these conceptual foundations is that illness in the human body manifests itself materially in the form of a toxic liquid which has its center of production in the immediate area of the abnormal swelling or which is the cause of the swelling in the body of the sick individual. In the majority of cases this threefold scheme can be stated: Something moving rapidly or erratically in the body has caused an area of the body to become swollen. This swollen area is producing a toxic liquid which, if removed from the body, will relieve the symptoms of the illness. The cause of the illness is destroyed by the supernatural power of Sanapia or by the medicines which she has endorsed with extraordinary potential.

In Sanapia's description of the execution of the final stages of witchcraft, 753
she made great note of the necessity of using an eagle plume which must be 754
prepared and attached to the tree branch in such a manner that it will be free 237
to dance and flutter with any breezes that should contact it. She also gestured rapidly to depict how the plume would react to the wind when she described the plume's placement in the tree branch. The reason why a feather is not used is that it would not move properly in the wind. The erratic movement of the plume is essential in witchcraft. In addition, the magical feather, upon entering the body of the victim, moves rapidly over the body, and it is only after Sanapia has magically surrounded it by enclosing it in a circle of charcoal that the feather's movement is made impossible.

Sanapia describes an extreme form of insanity as that state in which the 753
affected individual usually twitches, jerks, and "runs around crazy." Then again, [828]
when describing the whirlwind guise of the ghost, she made the point that the [775]
whirlwinds move around very quickly and erratically. When she describes the [825]
behavior of poisons injected by certain insects and poisonous spiders, she states [827]
that this poison, upon entering the body, turns into "eggs" which race wildly [201]
over the body. In sign language, Sanapia indicates "sickness" by a rapid, quivering movement of the hands over the chest area. This sign for sickness is noted for the Plains area generally by Tomkins (1926:51). More examples could be listed; however, I am attempting to state several slightly different circumstances in which rapid and/or erratic motion, or some variant of this theme, was considered in a definitely negative manner when considered in the context of its relation to the human body. Thus it can be seen that the malevolent essence

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159 scribed modes of behavior and thought can ebb and flow with the stimuli of
756 acculturation. He can bend, withdraw, aggress, and withdraw again, while retain-
177 ing a homogeneous and integrated self-concept. Sanapia, however, is relatively
554 rigid and must react immediately lest her role structure be shattered.

## Sanapia Prevails

159 To Sanapia, she is an eagle doctor first and foremost. Her whole life is
756 bound in this role; therefore, its protection is extremely dear to her. Sanapia
177 lives with compromise, rationalization, and intellectualization. Because of her
[157] functionalistic and pragmatic temperament, she must defend an institution which to her at times has little meaning in its particulars. Each new realization of acculturative changes stimulates her to attempt to fit this newly acquired realization into a nonantagonistic relationship to her role as Medicine woman. She knows that she must meet the threats of culture change directly if her institution is to continue to have meaning for Comanches who are reacting to acculturation.

In this manner she has incorporated elements and sentiments of Christianity and organized peyotism into her own religious structure in an attempt at compatibility with the religious atmosphere of her life situation. By accepting the basic tenets of Christianity and organized peyotism, she has also provided herself with further sources of supernatural powers. Sanapia has defined illness into "white" and "Indian" categories, thereby retaining her position in the overall medical structure of both cultures. She has borrowed words and concepts from the mass media to elaborate her views of certain aspects of physiology, health, and medicine. These are but a few examples. Sanapia, while anchoring her sentiments and loyalties in a traditional Comanche setting, has extended herself, through her concern with her profession, into the white culture.

Perhaps the most significant points this study has illustrated are the psychotherapeutic function which Sanapia possesses in contemporary Comanche
775 culture and the psychological function of ghost sickness. Although it cannot be
753 absolutely substantiated, it would appear that ghost sickness, in its present form,
177 is a new arrival in Comanche society. Ghost sickness can be considered, in most cases, a conversion reaction whose negative emotional basis is founded in the cultural and personal confusion and tension produced by the increasingly efficient success of acculturation in corroding the traditional basis of Comanche
159 society. It then appears that Sanapia is the curer of a dynamic and functional
756 human disorder. She is not a specialist in the treatment of broken bones or gun-
177 shot wounds like a buffalo doctor, nor of rattlesnake bites, like a snake doctor; she is the curer of an illness which is psychodynamic in nature. As her people change, ghost sickness will no doubt change, and Sanapia and successive eagle doctors' interpretation of ghost sickness will also change. Sanapia treats the individual rather than a specific static human affliction; she is essentially a native psychiatrist. This dynamic flexibility has enable Comanche eagle doctors to exist long after the other varieties of Comanche native doctors have had their function usurped by white doctors during the ongoing process of acculturation.